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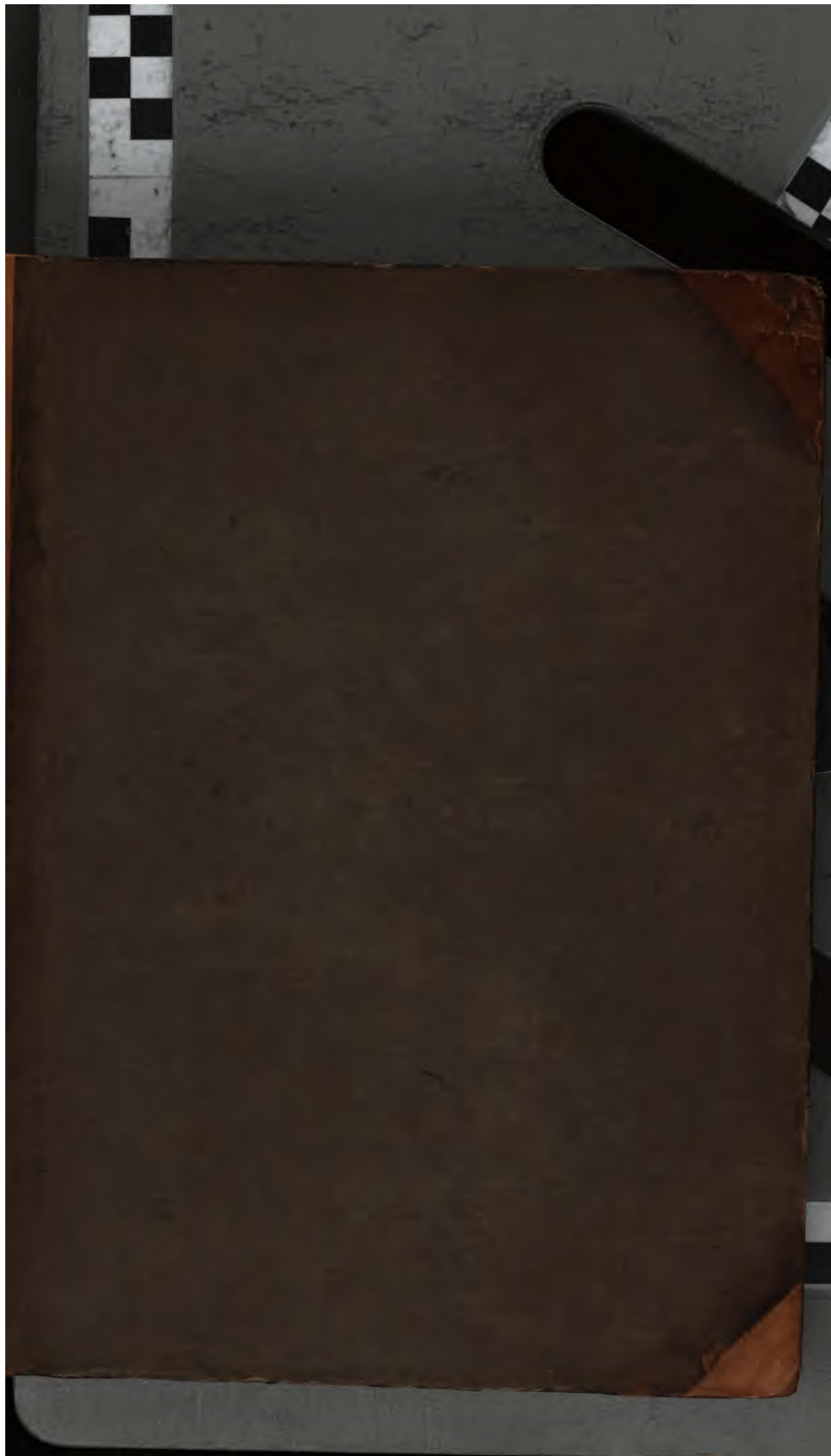
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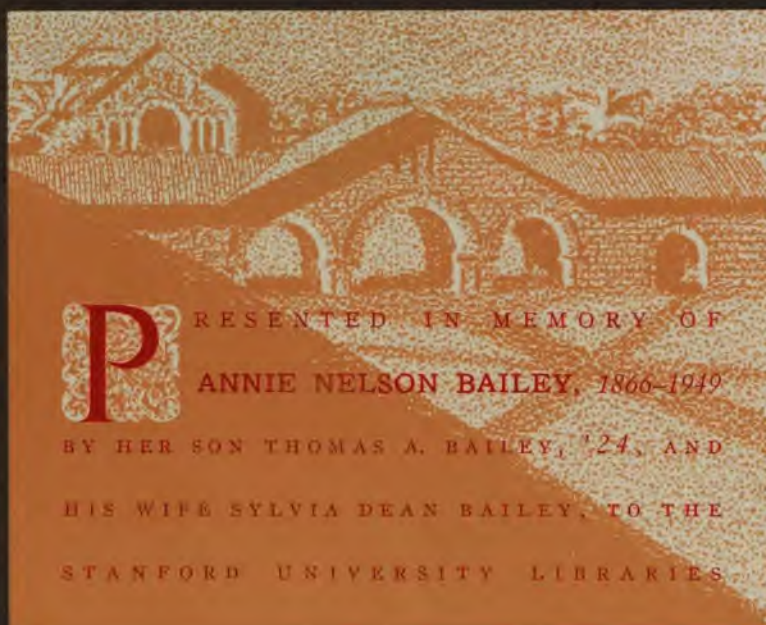
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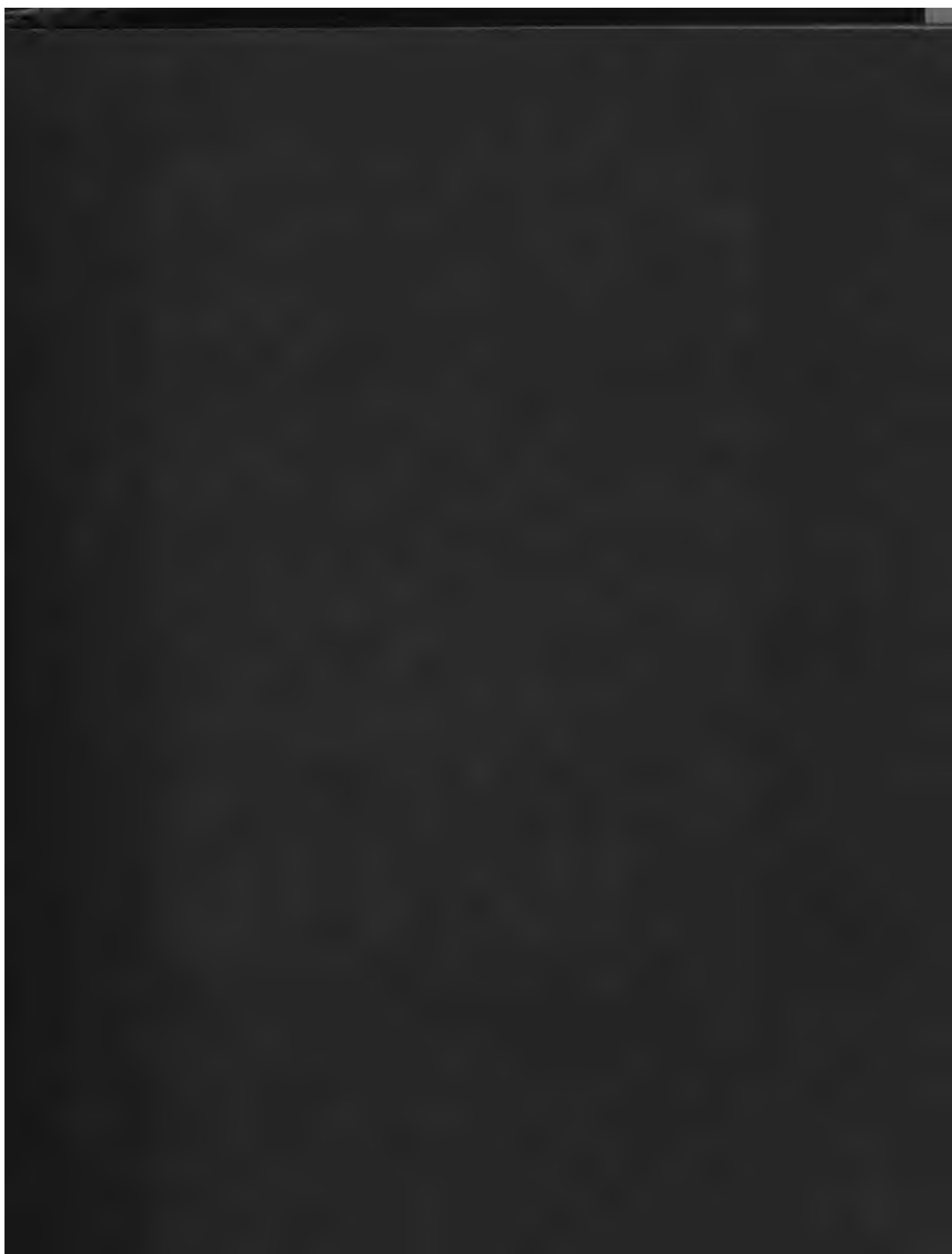
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O F T H E
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I N T H E C O U N T Y O F S O M E R S E T .

(EMBELLISHED WITH PLATES.)

BY JOSHUA TOULMIN, A. M.

Nec ea solum quæ talibus disciplinis (i. e. *singulis philosophiæ partibus*) continentur, sed magis etiam quæ sunt tradita antiquitùs, dicta ac facta præclarè, et nosse, et animo semper agitare conveniet. Quæ profectò nusquam plura majoraque, quam in monimentis nostræ civitatis reperientur. An fortitudinem, fidem, contemptum doloris ac mortis, meliùs alii docebunt, quam Fabricii, Curii, Reguli, Decii, Mutii, aliique innumerabiles?

QUINCTILIAN.

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A THIRD TIME ITS REPRESENTATIVE IN
PARLIAMENT,

AND A ZEALOUS ENCOURAGER OF THE FOLLOWING
WORK,

THIS HISTORY

(OF A TOWN WHICH OWES MANY OF ITS MODERN
IMPROVEMENTS TO HIS LOVE OF THE
PLACE OF HIS BIRTH)

IS GRATEFULLY AND RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

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P R E F A C E.

THE history of a particular town, though it cannot, in the variety of the events it comprehends, or the grandeur of the subject it handles, be compared with that of a nation, or empire, yet connects with it importance and utility. It is peculiarly interesting to natives; and it furnishes for their younger years a proper introduction to more general and extensive history. Here may, advantageously, commence their researches into the state and events of past ages. A taste for historical reading may be easily and agreeably given to youth, by beginning with facts taking place at home; and the connexion of them, with national affairs, will awaken a curiosity to become acquainted with the revolutions their country hath seen.

The history of a town is united with that of the kingdom, to which it belongs, and with that of the ages, through which it has stood. Publications of this kind are, particularly, serviceable towards an accurate and complete provincial history. They should not, therefore, because they are local, be neglected and overlooked. The history of a town constitutes a part of that whole, which commands attention by the magnitude of the object; and they, who, by birth, or residence, or any other circumstance are connected with it, feel a peculiar concern in a review of its fates.

In these views the history of Taunton may claim attention. Few towns, in this kingdom, have had a larger share in events of national importance; or can furnish a detail of transactions, of which it has been the theatre, more adapted to give lessons, on liberty and virtue, to the rising generation.

But, though Taunton is, on these accounts, a very proper subject for the purpose, its history had never been attempted, till about ten years ago, Mr. Locke, of Burnham, published proposals for it. From his ingenuity, and the attention he had given to the subject, the

P R E F A C E.

friends of his design promised themselves information and entertainment. But the multiplicity of his engagements, some unpleasant incidents, and his removal from the town, after he had for a short time been a resident in it, led him to drop his purpose; and in a friendly manner, to give the materials, which he had collected for it, to the printer.

The author of this work, after Mr. Locke had entirely relinquished his design, yielded to the inclination, which he had felt, before Mr. Locke's proposals appeared, to draw up an history of Taunton. His papers afforded a clue to direct enquiry and appeared to offer ample materials: but as the authorities, quoted, will shew, he has by no means confined himself to them. In reality he has executed his work according to his own ideas, and availed himself of Mr. Locke's MS. only as he has of any other writer, from whom he could borrow information. On this account he has found it a work, which required more industry in collecting, and more labour in composing, than he, at first, conceived would be necessary.

This will be accepted as an apology for the procrastination of its appearance: this delay has been increased by his being obliged to wait the time and convenience of those gentlemen, from whom he was encouraged to hope for information on some particular points. No one, who has not been concerned in preparing a work of this kind for the press, can conceive how much patience is, in this respect, liable to be tried.

The impatience, with which this publication has been expected, he owns, is encouraging to him: but though he ought not to affect a modesty, which becomes authors on their first appearance before the tribunal of the public, yet he cannot, on the present occasion, divest himself of all timidity and diffidence, lest expectation should be disappointed. It is the first essay of the kind from his pen. His pretensions to the character of an antiquarian are very small. And some particulars, proper to be enlarged upon in such a history, will not entertain or interest many.

He hopes, however, that he has not given his attention to useless trifles, nor directed his thoughts to subjects totally foreign from the nature

P R E F A C E.

nature of the profession in which he appears. He has brought forward some curious particulars, which in a few years more, for want of being recorded, would be irrecoverably lost. His work will hold up many instances of exertion, directed to the benefit of the town, as domestic examples, to awaken a spirit of emulation. And it will display, before the reader, a scene, which must instruct and affect every one, who has any idea what *liberty*, civil or religious, means: LIBERTY, that best birth-right of Englishmen; and, next to christianity, the most precious gift of heaven.

It has given him pleasure to hold up to remembrance the names of such gentlemen, who have, in any respect, rendered public services to the town of Taunton. This he will be bold to say, he has done, with candour and impartiality. It is scarcely necessary, he would hope, to caution the reader against considering such a tribute of praise, paid where the author conceives it was merited, as *pledging himself* to any character; though it is a point of virtue with him to do justice to *all*.

He cannot conclude this preliminary address without testifying the lively sense he has of the honour done him, by the ready and free patronage and numerous subscriptions, with which this work has been encouraged: for which he returns his sincere and cordial thanks. The gentlemen, whose obliging communications he has noticed in the proper places, are requested to accept his grateful acknowledgements: amongst them the Rev. Mr. Collinson, from whom the public expects soon the history of the county of Somerset, deserves particular mention. He has a very respectful and grateful sense of the attention paid to his design, by other gentlemen, to whom the pages of the history do not give him an opportunity to refer: of the politeness with which James Bernard, esq; of Crowcombe, offered him a free access to the valuable library of the late Thomas Carew, esq; of the friendship of William Hawker, esq; of Poundisford Lodge, for pointing out, and lending him some writers, who would not have otherwise fallen in his way, and from whom important information was to be derived: of the handsome manner, in which the learned Dr. G. Moore, archdeacon of Cornwall, not only favoured him with admittance

P R E F A C E.

admittance to the library of the cathedral of Exeter, but personally attended him in his researches : and of the readiness, with which Sir Thomas Gunston furnished him with the use of an authenticated copy of the charter of Taunton.

He likewise feels himself much indebted for many observations and considerable assistance to the ingenious and learned Mr. Henry Norris. In the enumeration of the people of the town, besides the aid he received from Mr. Norman, and Mr. Weekes, through their respective neighbourhoods, he owed much to the share, which the Rev. Mr. Darracot obligingly took in this part of his undertaking, by accompanying him through the town and assisting his enquiries through the whole of the survey.

He reflects on all these assistances with pleasure, as marks of personal respect, and as testimonies of approbation given to his intended work ; which inspire him with some degree of confidence, in submitting the execution of it to the candour of his friends and the public.

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THE

T H E
HISTORY OF TAUNTON.

C H A P. I.

*The ancient state of the town of Taunton. Its situation—antiquity—
manor—and religious foundations.*

TANTUN*, TAWNTON, THONTON, or, in the modern mode of spelling the word, TAUNTON, derives its name from the river Thone, or Tone. This river† rises at a place called Biverton Bottom, on Brinder's Hill, washes Hewish, divides Chipstaple from Wiveliscombe, Milverton from Stawley, Stawley from Ashbrittle and Holcombe, Kitsford from Langford, and Langford from Wellington; from whence it flows on, through Bradford and Bishop's Hull, to Taunton. Here it becomes navigable, and near Burrow-Bridge unites itself with the Parret. These rivers meet the Brent at Burnham, where they form a bay, that empties itself into the Bristol Channel‡.

The town stands on the great road from the Land's End, in Cornwall, to the north of England, lying between Exeter and Bridgwater, 33 miles N. E. of the former, and 11 miles S. of the latter. The situation rendering it the thoroughfare from Bristol and Bath to Exeter and Plymouth, it is enlivened with a continual succession of travellers, passing through it on pleasure or business; as this road is often preferred, on that account, to the more southern one from London to the West. Its distance from London is 148 miles W. by S. lon. 3° 15' W. and lat. 51° 6' N.

* This was the *Anglo-Saxon* name. See *Chronicon Saxonicum*, operâ Edmundi Gibson.

† The fish in this river are trout, eel, perch, gudgeon, flounder, roach, and dace, with a few pike and salmon.

‡ Mr. Locke's MS.

It has ever been a principal town in the county of Somerset.— Before the modern improvements were introduced, it was deemed well built: its streets are spacious, and, as it spreads over a considerable extent of ground, the houses, even in the middle of it, are generally furnished with good outlets and gardens; which contribute much to the pleasantness and salubrity of the town, as well as to the convenience of its inhabitants. It is a mile long from the east to the west, and its streets have a gradual descent to the river. It stands in a fertile and extensive vale, and is called by Camden one of the *eyes* of the county. The country all around it is beautified with green meadows, abounds in delightful orchards and gardens, is enriched with wood, and peopled with numerous villagers: so as to exhibit to the eye of the spectator, who approaches the town, a charming scene.— The county itself, though in the winter moist and marshy, is supposed by some to derive its name from the summer-like temper of the air*. The part of it, in which Taunton is situated, has, if not an exclusive, yet a peculiar, claim to the excellent qualities which are ascribed to the whole. On account of its fertility the peasantry used to boast, that it was so fruitful with the *sun* and *soil* alone as to need no manuring.— This country is called by the inhabitants *Taunton-Dean*†, i. e. the *Vale of Taunton*: and, from their high conceit of its pre-eminence above other countries, hath arisen a boastful proverb: “*Where should I be born else but in Taunton-Dean?*” as if it were a disparagement to be born in any other place; and none, in England, nay in the whole world, were to be compared with it.

* In a piece of Fuller, where all the counties are personified, a contest for the crown arises between London and York. England, after great altercation, is introduced in the character of a grave matron, to restore the crown, which had been placed on York, to London. She also advises the shires not to fall out: “Which,” she is represented as saying, “were so many several rooms of that house, whereof the king was the house-keeper. Conceive Cornwall for the porch, Devonshire for the hall, Somersetshire for the summer parlour (for it is too cold and wet for the winter), Cambridgehire for the chapel, Northamptonshire for the long gallery, Rutlandshire for the closet, Middlesex for the lodging chambers, Lincolnshire for the kitchen, Yorkshire for the stable, Cheshire for the cheese chamber, Northumberland for the coal-house, &c.” *Collectanea Curiosa*, vol. I. p. 225, 226.

† From the Saxon word *den*, which is added to the names of places, to signify their being situated in valleys or woods; for the word *den*, in that language, means both a valley and a woody place. *Saxonicum Chronicon. Regulæ Generales*, p. 5.

HISTORY OF TAUNTON.

3

Dr. Thomas Amory, a native of this town, in 1724, published the following poem, descriptive of its situation and advantages; which may be, fitly, introduced here.

Hail! native town with cheerful plenty blest'd,
 Of numerous hands and thriving trade possess'd:
 Whose poor might live from biting want secure,
 Did not resistless ale their hearts allure.
 Round thee, in spring, we view with ravish'd eyes,
 Italian scenes in English ground arise;
 Which, crown'd with freedom, rival paradise.
 Th' enamell'd meads with vast profusion show
 The various colours of the heavenly bow.
 The fat'ning Tone in slow meanders moves,
 Loath to forsake the happy land it loves:
 Forc'd to the main, by nature's law, it bears
 Back floating vessels fraught with richest wares;
 And diff'ring products from earth's diff'ring shores,
 Gather'd by commerce, lavish, on us pours.
 Upon its borders herds unnumber'd graze,
 With sheep whose fleeces Persian silks surpass;
 Nor prowling wolves, nor hungry lions fear,
 Which other flocks, in other pastures, tear.
 Tall bushy trees, o'er all the region found,
 With cooling shades refresh the fertile ground;
 Beneath whose coverts beauteous females stray,
 Fresh, artless, gentle, innocently gay,
 And pass, with flatt'ring swains, the sportful hours away.
 Sighing they listen to the am'rous tale,
 Nor fear lest wily snakes their steps assail.
 Gay, painted blossoms smile on lower trees,
 With promis'd nectar thirsty palates please,
 And with their sweets perfume the vernal breeze.
 While warbling birds melodious notes employ,
 At once exalt, and tell, the shepherd's joy.
 Here fruitful hillocks swell amidst the plain,
 In verdure clad, and rich in future grain;

B 2

Adown

Adown whose sides the murm'ring torrents roll,
 And charm the muse to bless the poet's soul.
 And, all around, proud, guardian hills ascend,
 Whose height from winds inclement well defend ;
 Whose bowels unknown stores of minerals hold,
 Which poverty disarm, and chase th' invading cold.
 But I, unequal, tempt the arduous toil :
 Large as thy vales, and generous as thy soil,
 The verse should be, which would thy praise proclaim,
 In numbers worthy of the matchless theme*.

The curiosity of the human mind, in its attempts to trace back the history of places to their first origin, for want of records, is often baffled and mortified. The memorials of ancient times are either lost†, or are not sufficiently minute. As to Taunton, there is reason to suppose, it was not unknown to the Romans. For, in the year 1666, two large earthen pitchers, full of medals, in weight 80 pounds each, were digged up by labourers, with mattocks, in ploughed fields, the one at Lawrence Lydeard, and the other within the parish of Stogumber (or Stoke Gomer), adjoining it. This discovery has been supposed to authorize the following conclusions: that, after the conquest of other parts of Britain, the Romans came to the Cangi, in Somerset: that, having conquered them, in a valley between Taunton and Withyel, at or near the place now called *Conquest*, they still continued a legion, or part of one at least, hereabouts, which they paid with such money as was found in the above-mentioned pitchers, to prevent any insurrections by land or invasions by sea: and that these forces, when called home to relieve the empire, distressed by

* These lines were originally published in Brice's Exeter paper. The above is taken from the original MS. in the possession of the Rev. Dr. Flexman, and copied by his son-in-law, Mr. Vowler, of the Minories, London.

† Before the invention of the art of printing, through the ignorance of the times, and the difficulty of multiplying copies, few books were published, and of those which were published the circulation was very limited. It gives a striking proof of the great scarcity of books; that, in 1424, the countess of Westmoreland presented a petition to the privy council, representing that the late king (Henry V.) had borrowed a book from her, and praying, that an order might be given, under the privy seal, for the restoration of the said book; which was granted with great solemnity. Rymer, quoted by Holt in his *Characters of Kings and Queens of England*, vol. II. p. 48.

the irruptions of the northern nations, buried these treasures; which the antiquarian, who makes these remarks, calls *Claudius Cæsar's*, and the *old Roman emperor's treasure*, found near Conquest*.

These observations are confirmed by the discovery of Roman coins, and divers other antiquities, in the foundations of an old house near the castle, 1643†: and by a like incident within the memory of man; when, on pulling down a house in St. James' parish, an old Roman coin was found. It was of the size of a farthing, with the head of Vespasian; the legend VESP. AVG. IMP. The reverse, a female captive, her hands bound behind her to a palm tree; the legend IVDAEA CAPTA, and, in the exergue, S. C.‡

But, in whatever obscurity this early period of the history of Taunton is involved, it clearly appears to have been a place of great note in the time of the Saxons. For Ina, one of the West-Saxon kings, as early as the year 700, built a castle here for his residence; and is said to have held here the first great council of his kingdom§: by whose assistance, according to Leland, he wrote a code of laws for the government of his subjects, which gave him great reputation as a legislator. But, if we may judge of them by those that were eminently distinguished by the title of his Ten Laws, we shall form no idea of the wisdom and comprehension of his mind. They relate chiefly to the superstition of the times, and the privileges of the clergy. The second prescribed a penalty for deferring the baptism of infants beyond

* Mag. Brit. & Hib. 4to. 1730. Somerset. p. 810, 811.

† This information was communicated by the Rev. Mr. Collinson.

‡ From the communication of Mr. Thomas Peacock.

§ When he established his laws, he saith: "I Ina, king of the West-Saxons, have called my fatherhood, aldermen, and my wisest commons, with the godly men of my kingdom, to consult of great and weighty matters." Here is represented, in king Ina, the king's royal person: his fatherhood, in those ancient days, were those whom we call bishops, and therefore were termed reverend fathers: by aldermen, the nobility is meant; so honourable was the word aldermen of old times, that only noblemen were called aldermen. By the wisest commons is signified knights and burgeses; and so is the king's writ at this day, "De discretioribus et magis sufficientibus." By godly men is meant the convocation-house; for that it only consisteth of religious men. To consult of great and weighty matters: so is the king's writ at this day; "Pro quibusdam arduis et urgentibus negotiis, nos, statum et defensionem regni nostri Angliæ, et ecclesiæ Anglicanæ concernentibus." Dodderidge on the Antiquity of Parliaments in Hearne's Collection of Curious Discourses, vol. I. p. 281.

thirty days, and a much greater when they died unbaptized*. One of them appears to have been dictated by humanity, and to have been intended as a mild and equitable provision for the ease and comfort of slaves, that they might not be worn out by unceasing labour; for it enacted, that, if a servant, by his master's command, should work on Sunday, he should be made free.

With this prince originated the tribute called *Peter-Pence*. For it was ordained by a general decree; that, in every family, possessed of any kind of goods to the value of twenty pence, throughout all the kingdom of the West-Saxons, one penny should be yearly collected at Lammas, and sent over to the blessed St. Peter and the church of Rome; which in English-Saxon was called *Romscott*. It was first paid under the notion of the *King's-Alms*†; but was afterwards required under the name of *Peter's-Pence*‡.

* Inet's History of the English Church, vol. I. p. 287.

† Speed's Succession of English Monarchs, p. 307.

‡ The original application and design of this tribute, according to Matthew of Westminster, was the support of the English, who might repair to Rome, to be instructed in literature and the catholic faith, in the English school, which Ina built there. To accommodate them he also erected a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary, in which they might celebrate divine service, and if they should happen to die at Rome, be interred*. His piety and munificence, in the style of that age, were displayed in various institutions in England. In 704, he built a monastery at Wells. In 708, rebuilt Glastonbury abbey, and exchanged the black monks for benedictines. He afterwards erected a monastery at Muchelney, in Somersetshire, and an abbey at Abingdon, in Berkshire†. After a reign of 37 or 38 years, he resigned his throne to his kinsman Ethelard, and travelled, on pilgrimage, to Rome; where he died, in 728. He is said to have taken this step at the persuasions of his queen Ethelburga, who had long urged him to it, without effect, till she hit upon this expedient. When, on a certain time, he had lodged at a manor in the country, with all regal splendor, and had been entertained with all the luxury the age afforded; on his departure, she directed the keeper of the royal seat to remove all the rich furniture, bedding, and hangings of the palace, to fill the rooms and all the offices with straw, ordure, and filth, and to lay a sow with pigs in the royal chamber. When every thing was thus prepared, to excite disgust, where before he had lodged with pleasure, she feigned urgent reasons to induce the king to visit it again. On his return to it and perceiving the loathsome appearance it wore, she took occasion to direct his thoughts "to the consideration of the vain pleasures of this world, which in a moment come to nought, together with the corruption of the flesh, being a filthy lump of clay, after it should once be dissolved by death." The historian tells us, that her persuasions, enforced by the scene before him, took effect. He renounced the world, and his queen herself became a nun in the abbey of Barking, where she was made an abbess, and died‡.

* See Weever's Funeral Monuments, p. 173. History, p. 127, 128.

† Locke's MS.

‡ Holingshead's Chronicle, vol. I.

The castle, which this king erected in Taunton, was destroyed in 722, by his queen, Ethelburga. A new castle was built by one of the bishops of Winchester, about the time of the conquest; and it was afterwards considerably improved, as well as repaired, by other bishops.

In an early period the manor of Taunton-Dean was connected with the see of Winchester: but it is uncertain by whose munificence this assignment was made; whether by Fritheswitha, the wife of Ethelard, successor to Ina, or by Emma, the wife of Ethelred II. Dugdale says*, the former lady gave, out of her patrimony, the manor of Taunton to the church of Winchester, where she was buried: to which Ethelard himself added seven manses, or dwellings for peasants†. By others it is asserted, that it was a grant of Emma; who, when a widow, was accused, by Robert, archbishop of Canterbury, to king Edward the confessor, her son, of incontinency with Alwine, bishop of Winchester. Upon this charge the bishop was imprisoned, and the royal lady treated with rigour. To exculpate her character, she offered, blindfold and barefooted, to pass over nine red-hot plough-shares, placed at unequal distances. This mode of trial, called the Fiery-Ordeal, was generally adopted in those times; and, in this case, the appeal was considered as made to the providence of God; who, it was supposed, would miraculously support the innocent. The issue of the experiment, it is said, evinced the innocence of queen Emma, who passed over them unhurt; and to express her gratitude to heaven, and to perpetuate the remembrance of her vindicated character, gave the manor of Taunton-Dean, and eight other valuable manors, to the bishop of Winchester and his successors‡. But Dr. Richardson, the learned editor of Godwin, treats this story, concerning Emma, as a monkish fable: because the best and most careful historians, near those times, Roger Hoveden, William of Malmesbury, Matthew of Westminster, and others, take no notice of this wonderful escape§.

* *Monasticon Anglicanum*, 1655, vol. I. p. 980.

† So is the word explained in Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum*, 1718, preface, p. 11. and in *Domesday Book* illustrated, p. 267.

‡ Locke's MS. and Godwin's *Catalogue of Bishops*.

§ Richardson *de Præsulibus Angliæ*, p. 57.

The religion of those times consisted very much in investing religious houses and characters with great estates. We survey the amazing grants of this kind with astonishment at the energy of superstition, which could thus engage the great proprietors of lands to strip themselves and their heirs of their patrimony: and we are not less astonished at the folly of the government, that could permit the monopolies of power and wealth, which sacred institutions thus obtained. It has been well observed, that, notwithstanding these alienations of private fortunes, they were not wholly lost to the public, but sometimes did eventually prove beneficial to the community: and, as they enabled their possessors to relieve and mitigate the public burdens, so they were at times improved to these purposes. The bishops of Winchester often advanced loans to the kings. William of Wykeham paid for his tenants, three several times, the subsidies granted to the king by parliament. Henry Beaufort, the successor to William of Wykeham, who was called the rich cardinal, lent Henry V. greatly involved in debt, by his continual wars, 20,000l.* There are also instances, on record, of the lenity and liberality of rich ecclesiastics towards their tenants. William of Wykeham, at his first entrance upon the bishopric of Winchester, remitted to his poor tenants certain acknowledgments, usually paid and due by custom, to the amount, says Godwin, of 520l. and according to Lowth, 502l. 1s. 7d. of which there was remitted to Taunton and Rympton 101l. 12s. 8d. Dūppa, one of his successors, remitted to his tenants no less than 30,000l.† The enumeration of the sums expended, from the emoluments of the religious, in acts of munificence and charity, would furnish a large volume. Monasteries endowed, colleges founded, schools erected, churches built, perpetual alms to the poor, and exhibitions to students, are monuments of the liberality, with which the estates that had been, in one sense, alienated from the community, were given back again to the public, in the application of them to objects of general utility. It is amazing, what immense sums were thus expended. But the greatness of the expenditure proves that the resources were great.

* Lowth's *Life of William of Wykeham*, p. 300.

† Granger's *Biog. Hist. of England*, 8vo. vol. III. 194, 195.

HISTORY OF TAUNTON.

9

The following table, which Mr. Locke found among the records of the manor of Taunton-Dean, will assist us to form an idea of its value.

	Holway Hundred.	Hull Hundred.	Poundis- ford Hundred.	Nailborne Hundred.	Staple- grove Hundred.	Total.
	l. s. d.	l. s. d.	l. s. d.	l. s. d.	l. s. d.	l. s. d.
Rent of Assize.	123 8 3½	49 10 8½	52 13 10½	39 16 1	62 6 11½	327 15 10½
Customs.	4 2 5	2 5 4	4 5 9	2 8 8½	3 2 6	16 4 8½
New Rents.	3 6 0	0 6 8	18 2 4	0 1 11½	0 6 0	22 2 11½
Farm Rents.	1 8 0	4 11 10				5 19 10
Sale of Works.	34 14 11½	23 0 9½	25 0 10½	14 18 6½	19 0 7½	116 15 9½
Heriots and Fines is uncertain.	25 0 0	55 0 0	47 0 0	44 0 0	13 0 0	184 0 0
Increase of Rents.		0 2 3	0 7 2			0 9 5
Issues of the Fairs.					0 6 8	0 6 8
Otterford.						10 0 0
Rimpton.						10 0 0
						693 15 3½

This sum, being near 700l. observes Mr. Locke, was a princely income, at the time of the conquest; and as it is charged on one of the divisions only, not containing above half the hundred of Taunton, it may be thought too bountiful a gift to any church or religious order, and too large a district to be comprehended in the idea of one single manor, which for extent and value cannot be paralleled in history. Its annual rent at present, as taken from an actual survey, amounts to 150,000l. an income far superior to that of any British peer, or even to several of the German princes. If the fee of this hundred, burthened, as in its present state, with taxes, were to be sold at twenty three years purchase, it would amount to a sum little short of three millions and an half.

The grant of such an extensive and valuable manor must necessarily have advanced the see of Winchester to a pre-eminence in wealth and power above most, if not all, the other sees. This diocese, accordingly, was anciently valued, in the king's books, at 3385l. 3s. 3d. and is now at 2793l. 4s. 2d. It is natural to expect that of those who have filled this see, there should have been persons of the first rank and dignity. We are told it has yielded to the church ten saints, and to Rome two cardinals; to England one lord chief justice, nine lords
C
chancellors,

chancellors, two lords treasurers, one lord privy seal, one chancellor of the university of Oxford, another of the exchequer, and twenty-four prelates of the garter*.

The first account we have of the extent and value of the manor of Taunton Dean, and of the privileges annexed to it, is the estimate made, when the see of Winchester was possessed by Stigand, chaplain to Edward the confessor, who was translated to it from Norwich, in 1047. He gelded, says the Domesday Book, for fifty-four hides and two virgates and an half of land. The arable is one hundred carucates. Besides this, the bishop has in demesne land to the amount of twenty carucates, which never paid geld, and has there thirteen ploughs. There are fourscore villains, and fourscore and two cottagers, and seventy servants, and sixteen colliberts, and seventeen swineherds, rendering seven pounds and ten shillings. Among all they have sixty ploughs. There are sixty-four burgesses, rendering thirty-two shillings. There are three mills, rendering one hundred shillings wanting sixty pence. A market rendering fifty shillings, and for the mint fifty shillings. There are forty acres of meadow. Pasture two miles long and one mile broad. Wood one mile long and as much broad. When bishop Walepilin (Walkelyn, successor to Stigand) received it, it yielded fifty pounds, now it yields an hundred and fifty-four pounds and thirteen pence, with all its appendages and customs.

These customs belong to Tantone: Burhgeristh, privilege of adjudging and executing thieves, breach of the peace, hainfare, hundred penny and St. Peter's pence, churchset, to hold the bishop's pleas thrice a year without notice, and sending men to the army with the bishop's men. These same customs in Tantone pay these lands: Talande (Tolland), Acha (Oak), Holeford, Ubcedene and Succedene (Up-Cheddon and South-Cheddon), Maidenobroke, Laford (Langford), Hilla (Hill-Bishops) and Hela (Hele), Nicnehede (Ninehead), Nortone, Bradeforde, Halsa (Halfe) and Hafelda (Heathfield), Scobnolare (Shopnoller) and Stocka (Stoke). These two lands are not obliged to attend the army. The same customs owe they of Bauuebga (Baweburga or Bagborough), except the army and funeral obventions. Of all these lands those who are about to acquit them-

* Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum*, 1718, p. 12.

selves by oath or ordeal come to Tantone. When the lords of these lands die, they are buried in Tantone*.

Though it be not easy to explain every term and custom, mentioned in the domesday account of Taunton, with precision, yet we gain from it a general idea of the extent of the manor, of the power of the lord, and of the privileges enjoyed by the town in that remote period. It was not only the seat of the bishop of Winchester's jurisdiction, and a great source of his wealth, but also a mart and place of trade; for then there were in it sixty-four burgessees. These in those times were tradesmen, who, in great towns, had their patrons, under whose protection they traded, and paid an acknowledgment for it to their lords or patrons†.

The tenures in the manor of Taunton-Dean, for the most part, consist of customary and copyhold lands and tenements of inheritance, divided into two kinds: *Bondlands*, which are the ancient dwelling tenements, held by a customary fine and rent certain, and subject to heriots and manerial services; and *Overlands*, where anciently no dwelling stood, held by a fine and rent certain, but exempted from the payment of heriots, and from every other custom, suit, or service. Some of the customary tenements oblige the tenants to execute the office of reeve, and to collect the bishop's rents, which amount, in the whole, to about 1600l. per annum‡.

A court is, or ought to be, kept at the exchequer, every Saturday, before the steward or his deputy, for adjusting disputes among the

* From a translation of the domesday account of Taunton, communicated by the Rev. Mr. Collinson. Some of the terms used in this account require explanation. As to the measurement of lands here used it must remain, in a great degree, undefined. For a hide of land was an indefinite quantity, meaning in general as much as might be ploughed with one plough in a year; but including, according to circumstances, sometimes more, sometimes fewer acres, from 50 to 120, or more. A carucate and virgate are likewise indefinite measures. Jacob (*Law Dict.*) considers the first as equal to a plough land; or to 100 acres: and a virgate as consisting of 24. Villains were of two sorts; one bound to the person, the other annexed to the manor, of the lord. Colliberts were tenants in soccage, manumitted under certain restrictions, and of a middle condition between servants and freemen. Burgherifth was the violation of the peace in the town (*violatio pacis in villa*). Hainfare, or hamfare, was the breach of the peace in a house. Hundred-penny was tribute collected by the lord of the hundred. Churchset, quasi *semen ecclesiæ*, was corn paid to the church. See Jacob's *Law Dictionary*.

† Brady's *Historical Treatise on Burghs*, p. 27, 28.

‡ Locke's *MS. and Customs of the Manor of Taunton-Dean*.

tenants, and for recovering small debts: but as the fee for a summons is only 1d. for an attachment, 4d. for a declaration, 6d. an appearance, 2d. and so in proportion with regard to other fees, it has of late years fallen into disuse; for those fees, having been established with the customs of the manor, as early as the eleventh century, cannot be altered, though the value of money, to which all fees should bear a proportion, is greatly changed and reduced since that period*.

The customs and fines to which this tenure is subject are many and various; and an accurate knowledge of them can be obtained only by long experience. The mode of succession, in this manor, is singular, and is sometimes productive of very serious evils to families: for estates, according to the custom of it, descend to the widow of a man, though a second or third wife, to the prejudice of the issue under a prior marriage, who are totally precluded, though the lands were the ancient inheritance of their father.

Another peculiarity, with respect to the right of succession, is, that the younger son inherits before the elder. A custom, which this tenure has in common with Borough-English. The learned have been at a loss to ascertain the origin and ground of a custom, which thus inverts the order of nature. Sir William Blackstone conjectures, with great judgment, that it might be deduced from the Tartars. Amongst this people the eldest sons, as they advanced to man's estate, migrated from their father with a certain portion of cattle; and the youngest son only remaining at home, became, in consequence, heir to the father's house and all his remaining possessions. This conjecture not only assigns a natural and rational reason for a custom, that on the face of it wears a strange appearance; but is confirmed by the consideration, that not this custom only was long prevalent, in Tartary and the northern nations, but many other feudal practices† prevail

* Mr. Locke has published a tract, to which we would refer the reader, entitled, "The ancient Customs of Taunton-Dean," carefully copied from an original record, presented by a Taunton-Dean jury, during the usurpation of Oliver Cromwell, on the 15th of December, 1647, before Nathaniel Whetham, John Hurst, James Price, and Sylvanus Taylor, surveyors appointed by an ordinance of parliament for the sale of bishops' lands: to which are added the names of the above jury, a copy of their presentment, a list of the freehold lords of manors who did service at that court, and some other particulars.

† As parliaments and the attendance of the great vassals, with their contingents of troops, on the princes in their expedition.

there;

there; nay the whole feudal system, while in Europe it is an exotic plant, is indigenous, universal, and immemorial in the East*.

Will not the same principle assign also the origin of the other peculiarity in the succession of estates in this manor? For, as in the course of events, the younger son would frequently be left in a state of minority, the mother, as his natural guardian, would succeed to the immediate possession and enjoyment of the father's estate.

The inconveniences, which must sometimes arise from these singular customs, are, in a degree, counterbalanced by the mode of conveyance practised in this manor; which is by a surrender of the estate, upon every sale or mortgage, into the hands of the lord; which surrender is lodged in the exchequer, or the room where all the titles of the manor are repositied, and may at any time be examined. This makes it easy to prove the validity of a title, and is a security against all frauds in mortgages.

The manor of Taunton, which originally included the town and borough, is now distinct from it. For the latter now stands, for the most part, on fee-simple lands, subject to chief rents, called bishop's rents. When this separation took place is a matter of some doubt. Some are of opinion that it was dismembered, 1421, by Henry Beaufort, son of John of Gaunt, who was translated to the see of Winchester, 1405. But his successor, William Waynfleet, in the sixth year of Edward IV. made a grant in fee of the guildhall, in Taunton (some years since pulled down), to Nicholas Dixon, the perpetual vicar of St. Mary Magdalen, under the yearly tribute of a red rose, as a mark of attachment and loyalty to the house of Lancaster. In this grant, the town, borough, and market are said to belong to the see of Winchester. This shews that the fee-simple estates, considered as disjoined from the Taunton-Dean tenure, must have been granted to the freeholders since 1467†.

According to a respectable author, the town is found to have been the estate of lord Bonville, an ancient family of this county. For William, son of Nicholas Bonville, was knighted by Henry III. in the

* Richardson's Dissertation on the Language, Literature, and Manners of the Eastern Nations, p. 153, 160, 162.

† Locke's MS.

35th year of his reign. Of him descended William, lord Bonville of Chewton*. Lord Bonville was besieged in his castle of Taunton, says William of Worcester, 1449, by the earl of Devon: and there came to his aid, lord De Moleyns, the duke of York, William Herbert, and others; and Bonville delivered himself up to the duke of York†. Lord Bonville espousing the interest of the house of York, which then aimed at the crown, and being taken in the second battle of St. Albans, 38th Henry VI. was beheaded. Elizabeth, his widow, had this manor for her dowry; and, after her death, it came to her grand-child and heir, Cicely, the daughter of his eldest son, William, lord Harrington, who was slain before at the battle of Wakefield‡. This lady, marrying to John Boucher, lord Fitz-Warine, afterwards created earl of Bath, brought the manor into that family§.

In a review of the ancient state of the town of Taunton, we can by no means overlook the religious institutions, which owed their origin to the sentiments of the times: and to the establishment of which, many bishops of Winchester, as of other sees, consecrated their wealth. A monastic life is supposed indeed to have particularly suited the serious and gloomy temper of the English nation, as it made a most rapid progress in these kingdoms, and retained its first fervor here longer than in any other country: upon this account, England is said to have merited the appellation of the *Isle of Saints*. The reign of king Stephen was distinguished by the great number of monasteries, both of monks and nuns, established in it||.

* Mag. Brit. & Hib. Somerset. p. 808.

† Liber Niger Scaccarii, vol. II. p. 475.

‡ Magna Britannia, ut supra.

§ Mr. Locke says, that the manors of Drayton, Pockington, Meriot, and Pixton, in the neighbourhood of Taunton, formerly belonged to the Bonville family: and the manor of Norton Fitz-Warren belonged to the earls of Bath. He conceives, that there is a mistake in the above account of the manner in which the manor of Taunton came into the family of the earls of Bath. For, in the peerages, Cicely Bonville is said to have been married first to Henry, earl of Wiltshire, and then became second wife to Thomas Grey, marquis of Dorset, great-grandfather of lady Jane Grey, and ancestor to Henry Grey, earl of Stamford. His son, who died before his father, married with Dorothy, daughter of Edward Bouchier, fourth earl of Bath; whose other daughter, named Ann, married with Sir Christopher Wrey, bart. And, by a deed of partition between Sir Bouchier Wrey, her son, and lord Stamford, it appears, that the earl of Bath was entitled to the manor of Taunton, the manor of Huntipill, and some other manors.

|| Grosley's Observations on England, translated by Nugent, vol. I. p. 321, note, and 323.

A few

A few years before he ascended the throne, in 1127, William Giffard, bishop of Winchester, built and endowed a priory, or nunnery of black canons. It was situated on the north side of the town, without the East-gate: and seems to have stood in a direct line with James-street, about sixty yards from the spot, on which the new farm-house, called The Priory, stands. Near to this site is a street, called Canon-street: and there have been lately discovered in it the ruins of large gothic arches and hewn stones*. This monastery was dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul. It was so much improved and increased by the successor of William Giffard, Henry de Blois, brother to king Stephen, that he came in for an equal share of honour as the founder of it†.

But the exclusive claim of William Giffard, to be considered in this light, was ascertained by an inquisition taken on oath before the king's escheators, at Taunton, in the 10th year of the reign of Edward II. And by a charter of confirmation, which passed in the reign of Henry II. reciting the foundation of the priory and the subsequent grants made to it, it appears, that the endowment of it, when first established by the founder, consisted of all the churches of Taunton, with their chapels and all their appurtenances, the manor of Blackdown, the church of Kingston with its chapels and appurtenances, the church of Bishop's Lydeard, the church of Angersleigh, and the church of Hill-Bishops, with their respective appurtenances; and that Henry de Blois, the successor of William Giffard, augmented this endowment by a grant of the church of Pitminster with its chapels and appurtenances‡.

It had many other considerable benefactors. William, lord Mohun, in the reign of Henry I. soon after the foundation, gave to the canons of this house the manor of Lydeard, in Wiltshire. William Montacute, earl of Salisbury, granted to it the manor and hundred of Dulverton,

* Locke's MS.

† Taunton. Prior. Canon. Reg. or S. Aug. Bathon. diocesis. Gul. Giffarde & Henry Blezance (Blesensis) episcopi Wintonienses fundatores. Leland's Collectanea, vol. I. p. 81.

‡ From deeds preserved by Dugdale, in *Monasticon Anglicanum*, volumen alterum, per R. Dodsworth & Gul. Dugdale, p. 83, who calls the charter of confirmation a charter of Edward III. but erroneously: for the royal personage, who by this deed ratifies the former grants, is expressly said to be Henry, king of England, duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and earl of Anjou; and the bishops, who witnessed to it, are those who held episcopal sees in the reign of Henry II.

with

with all the appurtenances belonging to it, to hold in fee-farm at the yearly rent of 10l. which demise is dated in the chapter of the priory of Taunton. Robert Arundel added the church of Diffam, with two hides of land. William, the son of Odo, with the consent of William, his grandson and heir, gave the manor of Wildeland, with the church and its appurtenances; Richard de Turberville, with the approbation of his brother Hugh, the church of Dulverton, and the manor of Golia land; Roger Briton, the manor of Uppecot; Baldwin de Combe, the manor More, and also sixteen acres of land; Geoffry Foliot, a virgate and half of land in the manor of Stanton; Osbert and Geoffry de Hidon, the manor of Middleton; and Hugh de Flury, twenty acres of land in Hestercombe*.

Besides these donations, William of Wykeham bequeathed to the prior and convent of Taunton 100 marks to pray for his soul†. And Jasper Tudor, earl of Bedford and Pembroke, half-brother to king Henry VI. gave orders, by his will, that his body should be buried in this monastery, and that a monument, suitable to his degree, should be erected over it; bequeathing 40l. per annum, out of his lands, for four priests to sing perpetually for the weal of his soul. He died 1497‡.

The priory of Taunton had, in 1293, lands in Thorne to the amount (as valued in pope Nicholas' taxation) of 15s. In Preston near Milverton, 10s. Ash-priors, 100s. Ninehead, 25s. West-Monkton, 10s. Lydeard St. Lawrence, 20s. North-Petherton, 20s. Bridgwater, 10s. Spaxton, 13s. 4d. Strington, 9s. Haswell, 10s. Dulverton, 26s. Stoke, 30s. Lands in Thurloxtton were appropriated to the pitancier of the same convent§.

At the reformation it was also possessed of certain lands, tenements, gardens, cottages, and burgages, with their appurtenances, lying and being without the gate of Canon-street, Middle-street, and St. James-street, in the parishes of St. Mary Magdalen, as well within as without the borough, St. James, and West-Monkton, to the clear yearly value

* Dugdale, ut supra, and Mag. Brit. p. 882.

† Lowth's Life of William of Wykeham, p. 294.

‡ Locke's MS.

§ From the archives in the cathedral of Wells, communicated by the Rev. Mr. Collinson.
of

of 6l. 19s. 7½d. and also of lands, tenements, gardens, courtilages, cottages, or burgages, situate as well within as without the said gate of Canon-street, Middle-street, and St. James-street, in the said parishes of St. Mary Magdalen, within the borough, St. James, and West-Monkton, to the clear yearly value of 29l. 12s. 4d.*

In 1339, there were twenty-five canons belonging to this foundation†.

Eceton, in his Thesaurus, says, that there belonged to Taunton priory the gift of the impropriate tithes of the following nineteen parishes: that is to say; Taunton St. Mary Magdalen, to which belonged six chapels of ease, viz. Taunton St. James, Ruishton, Trull, Wilton, Stoke St. Mary, and Thurlebeere; Kingston, with Cothelstone, a chapel of ease; Pitminster, with Corfe, a chapel of ease; Bishop's Hull, Ninehead, Ash-priors, Dulverton, Withiel, Otterford, St. Michael's Church, and Staplegrove; which last is a rectory, divided from Taunton and made a separate parish, by act of parliament, in 1554‡.

In the 24th year of Henry VIII. a small monastery or priory of canons regular of St. Augustine, at Staverdale, near Bruton, which was founded by the ancestors of the Seymours, or St. Maurs, was united to the monastery of Taunton. Ela, the widow of Sir Richard de S. Maur the elder, by her testament, dated Nov. 28, 1409, 11 Henry IV. directed that her body should be buried in the new chapel of this priory, next to the grave of the said Sir Richard de S. Maur, her husband. To this monastery Sir Richard Lovel, knight, gave certain lands, to the value of 40s. per annum, for the finding one chaplain to celebrate daily prayers for the souls of the said Richard and his ancestors, in the church of this priory§.

Soon after the union of this religious house with the priory of Taunton, broke out the storm, which involved all the religious houses in one ruin. That in this town shared the common fate. In the

* From the deed, being the original grant of the lands belonging to the priory, in the possession of Mr. Rogers, druggist, in Honiton; with the use of which he has, in a very obliging manner, favoured the author.

† From the archives of the cathedral of Wells, communicated by the Rev. John Collinson.

‡ Locke's MS.

§ Locke's MS. and Magna Britannia, p. 882.

26th of Henry VIII. a commission was granted to John Clerk*, bishop of Bath and Wells, Sir William Stourton, knight, Hugh Powlet, William Portman, and Roger Kynsey, to take the value of the lands belonging to this monastery. They reported the clear annual value to be, according to Dugdale, 286l. 8s. 10d. but according to Speed, 438l. 9s. 10d. including the priory of Staverdale, recently annexed to it†.

The church of St. Mary Magdalen was, originally, only a chapel dependent on the mother church dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, the patrons of the convent. There were also three other chapels, viz. St. Margaret's, situated at the bottom of East-streech; St. Powle's, or Paul's, in the west part of the town, in the parish of Hill-Bishops, the house now occupied by Mr. Mallack; and St. Leonard's, in the north end of the town, in the parish of St. James‡.

Another religious foundation, in Taunton, was a leper-house, near the chapel of St. Margaret, the advowson and patronage of which was granted, about the year 1280, to the abbot and convent of Glastonbury, by Thomas Lambritz. There appears to have been also a house of white or carmelite friars, founded in 1322, by Walter de Meryet§. Both these houses are supposed to have been private property, before the dissolution of monasteries, for they are not mentioned in Leland's survey||.

Amongst the other religious endowments, dictated by the superstition of the times, were chantries; which were little chapels, or particular altars, in cathedral, collegiate, and even parochial churches, with salaries from lands or other revenues, for the maintenance of one

* John Clerk, D. D. and master of the rolls, was consecrated in 1523; whom Henry VIII. employed in frequent embassies. When this prince wrote against Luther, he sent a copy of his tract to the pope, by the hands of Dr. Clerk; who, on the occasion, delivered an elegant oration before the consistory of cardinals. In 1540, he went ambassador to the duke of Cleves, to assign the reasons of the king's having divorced his sister, the lady Ann of Cleves. This embassy cost him his life, for he is supposed to have been poisoned; and, having with great difficulty reached home, he died in February, 1540, and was buried in the burying-ground of the monastery called the Minories, London. Godwin's Catalogue of Bishops, p. 310. and Richardson de Præsulibus Angliæ Commentarius, p. 387.

† Bacon's Liber Regis.

‡ Tanner, and Grant of the priory.

§ Tanner's Notitia Monastica, preface, p. 16, 17.

|| Locke's MS.

or more priests, daily to sing mass and perform divine service for the souls of the donor, and such as he should direct. St. Paul's cathedral had forty-seven of these chantries : and seven were annexed to St. Mary Magdalen's church, in Taunton. At the dissolution of the religious houses, a reserve, by way of pension to the priests who had officiated in them, was made out of the revenues of these chapels. The titles of those, which were in the church of Taunton, the names of the last incumbents, and the amount of the yearly pensions, in 1553, stood as follows.

		l.	s.	d.
St. Andrew.	Henry Bull.	5	0	0
St. Michael.	John Seyman.	4	16	0
Holy Trinity.	Ralph Wylkins.	5	0	0
Holy Cross Fraternity.				
St. Ethelred.	William Callowe.	5	0	0
Virgin Mary.	{ John Pytte,	4	0	0
	{ William Trowbridge.	4	0	0
Twing's Chantry.	Alexander Maggot.	3	14	4

In 21 Richard II. Robert Bathe and Tiffania his wife gave four messuages, in Taunton, to the use of the fraternity of the Holy Cross, in the church of St. Mary Magdalen, Taunton*.

The destruction of these religious institutions, it may be easily conceived, brought an immense sum into the coffers of the king. The neat annual income of the religious houses in the county of Somerset only was 7487l. 18. 7½d. This estimate may be supposed to be much beneath the full value, for the estates were let on low terms, the clergy taking 5l. rent for a farm worth 50l. yearly. A vast treasure arose also from the gold, silver, precious stones, and furniture, found in these repositories of pious munificence. The bullion, in gold and silver, discovered in the single abbey of St. Edmondsbury, amounted to 5000 marks†.

Justice and policy seemed to require that some proportion, at least, of the riches, which had been thus wrested from the public and religious uses, should be applied again to some purposes of general utility and piety. Henry VIII. accordingly, endowed some new fees, and

* From the archives of Wells cathedral.

† Stevens' Historical Account of Taxes, p. 203, 214, and Acta Regia, vol. III. p. 388.

provided others with suffragan bishops. In 1535, March 7, he passed an act for the election of several, setting forth that certain dioceses required the aid and comfort of such assistant prelates, and nominating certain persons as fit to be elected to this dignity. Among the places, in the county of Somerset, appointed for sees of the suffragan bishops, were Bridgwater and Taunton*. This act was repealed in 1553, act 1st and 2d of Mary; but revived in 1558, and has never been repealed since. William Finche, prior of Bremar, was consecrated bishop of Taunton. There were twenty towns in England, which, under the above act of Henry VIII. were favoured with the privilege and honour of having suffragan bishops†.

But, notwithstanding some provisions made for foundations, consecrated to religion or devoted to literature, the royal coffers were enriched by sales and grants of the estates belonging to monasteries.—These alienations were made for sums much below the real value of the lands; and the opportunity of making very advantageous purchases more easily reconciled the people to the violation of what had, before, been deemed sacred property‡. Some regard was also paid to the condition of those who were thus dispossessed of a property which had

* Acta Regia, vol. III. p. 305—307.

† Locke's MS.

‡ The alienations of monasteries do not appear to have been made by any regular principles; but to have depended on the present humour of a capricious king, who sometimes exchanged the abbey lands for other lands inferior in quality and cultivation; sometimes staked them at play; and at other times gave them away, without thought, or as a reward for the most trivial service. He transferred a religious house, of some value, to a woman, because she had presented him with a dish of puddings, that pleased his palate. One gentleman obtained a grant of a priory, without its being known, at the time, on one side what was solicited, or on the other side what was granted. He was the son of Sir Philip Champernown, of Modbury, in Devon, and resided at court. On a day when two or three other gentlemen, who had posts at court, were waiting at a door through which the king was to pass, with a petition, requesting the grant of certain abbey lands, specified in it, Mr. Champernown met with them, and was inquisitive to know their suit, which they were as careful to preserve a secret. The king making his appearance, they fell on their knees and presented their petition. Mr. Champernown, confident that courtiers would not beg any thing hurtful to themselves, joined them in the suit; which was immediately granted. They returned thanks, and so did Mr. Champernown. He afterwards demanded his share in the grant; which the others refused. On this he made his appeal to the king, who established his claim by avowing an equal meaning in his largess. On this decision the other gentlemen granted him the priory of St. Germain's, in Cornwall, valued at 243l. 8s. yearly rent; which, by him or his heirs, was afterwards sold to Mr. Elliot. Fuller's Church History of Britain, book vi. p. 317.

hitherto

hitherto supported them in ease and luxury. William Williams, the prior of Staverdale monastery, at the time of its dissolution, had a present gratuity of 30*l.* and a pension of 60*l.* per annum, during his life. The priory, with the lands belonging to it, were granted by Henry VIII. in the 36th year of his reign, to John, earl of Oxford. The lands, at Blagdon, belonging to Taunton, were given to Sir Thomas Davey, knight, one of the gentlemen of the privy chamber to Henry VIII. And Taunton priory, under the name of Taunton nuper prioratus, alias Taunton late priory, with sundry other lands, by a grant, which passed the great seal the 5th day of March, in the 36th year of Henry VIII. in consideration of the sum of 429*l.* 15*s.* 10*d.* paid to the treasurer of the chamber of surveyors general of the king's lands, and the sum of 807*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.* paid to the treasurer of the court of augmentations of the revenues of the crown, was given to William Chapleyn and John Selwood, to be held in free soccage and not in capite, by fealty only in lieu of all services; like the manor of Cansford, in the county of Dorset*. From the first of these gentlemen, from whom it came to be called Chapleyn's holding, it descended to the late Mr. Joseph Sweeting, attorney at law, in this town; in whose family it still remains†.

In the ancient history of Taunton must be included its establishment into an archdeaconry. Archdeacons, in their original institution, had no relation to the diocese, but only to the episcopal see; and no jurisdiction, either in the cathedral or out of it, was annexed to their office. But when bishops, as barons, were obliged to give a more frequent

* The same conveyance included also the grant of the manor of Pyeworthy, in the county of Devon, together with the advowson of the rectory of Pyeworthy, late the property of Margaret, countess of Salisbury, attainted of high treason; of the manor of Wrangton, in the said county, late the property of the priory of Plympton; of the manor and rectory of Bukyngton, late the property of the abbey of Hertland; of the manor of Westcombeland, in the county of Somerset, late the property of the hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, in England; and of a messuage and tenement, called Guyrtgraunge, in the parish of Kyllynyock, in the county of Anglesea, late the property of the monastery of Conway. The clear yearly value of these lands stood thus: viz. Of Pyeworthy, 19*l.* 18*s.* 11½*d.* of Wrangton, 61*l.* 15*s.* 6½*d.* of Bukyngton, 71*l.* of Westcombeland, 81*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.* and of Guyrtgraunge, 50*s.* The manor of Pyeworthy was to be held in capite, by the service of the twentieth part of a knight's fee: and the annual sum of 13*s.* 7*d.* was to be paid for tenths, to the court of augmentations, for the manor of Wrangton; 14*s.* for Bukyngton; 17*s.* 4*d.* for Westcombeland; and 5*s.* for Guyrtgraunge. From the deed before quoted.

† On the authority of the deed to which we have above referred.

attendance

attendance upon the kings in their great councils, it became expedient to invest delegates with authority for the government of their dioceses ; and it was natural to enlarge the powers of those who had been, before, more immediately connected with their sees. This happened soon after the Norman conquest ; and the first prelate who instituted an archdeacon, in his diocese, was Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, about the year 1075*. The first appointment of this kind in Taunton, appears to have been in 1106, the 7th of Henry I. In 1293 it was rated at 50 marks. The jurisdiction of its archdeacon extends to twenty parishes in Somersetshire, exclusive of the thirty parishes that constitute the hundred of Taunton-Dean†.

* Grey's Ecclesiastical Law, p. 353, 355, and Jacob's Law Dictionary.

† Locke's MS.

C H A P. II.

The plan of the town, and the principal public structures.

FEW towns are laid out in a superior mode for convenience or air, most of the streets being wide, and the arrangement leaving room, in general, for extensive outlets and gardens. The principal streets run from east to west, and from north to south. The street at which you enter from the London road, to the East-gate, almost half a mile long, has the name of East-streech: after that, till it reaches nearly to the middle of the town, it bears the name of East-street. The central part of the town is called Fore-street, from which two streets branch out; one to the north, deriving its name from its aspect; the other to the south, called High-street. Parallel to this runs a street, called Paul-street: and from the end of North-street, by the side of the river, extends eastward, James-street. Parallel to it lies a retired one, which from its situation has the name of Middle-street: and from the east end there branches off another, called Canon-street, till it bends towards the left, when it takes the name of Tancred-street, and terminates at East-gate. Here it opens nearly opposite to another, running southward from the same point, called Silver-street. The southern extremity of Paul-street is joined to High-street by a short one, called Mary-street. From North-street you pass over a fine bridge of six arches, erected over the river Tone, and kept in repair by the county, to North-town, or Norton*, an adjoining town, formerly populous, but now greatly reduced in the number of houses and inhabitants. Another bridge, at the extremity of High-street,

* The antiquity of Norton is expressed in the following traditional distich:
 Taunton was a furzy down
 When Norton was a market town.

leads

leads to South-town, vulgarly called Shuttern*, which is included in the borough, and was also once much more populous than it is at present.

Among the first objects which accost the eye of the traveller are the public buildings of the town; which, according to the purposes to which they are devoted, may be classed into those raised for 1. Religion, 2. Civil Government, 3. Charity, and 4. Pleasure.

In Taunton, the structures consecrated to religion are two parish churches, and five dissenting meetings or chapels.

Of the parish churches the largest and most magnificent is that of St. Mary Magdalen, situated near the center of the town. It is also called Mardelin, and Maudlin. It is a vicarage, valued, in the king's books, at 20l. 3s. 4d. The rectory of this parish was rated, in 1292, at 90 marks. The original appointment of the vicarage took place in 1308, 2 Edward II. under Walter (Hafelshaw†,) then bishop of Bath and Wells: who, upon information of the want of due order and discipline in the parish, and the frequent danger to which the parishioners were exposed of dying without the usual preparatory ceremonies enjoined by the church, appointed Anthony de Bradeneye, his official, and Henry de Chanyngton, archdeacon of Taunton, commissioners for that purpose. Accordingly, they ordained, with the consent of the prior and convent, that master Simon de Lym, who had been already instituted by the ordinary as vicar of the chapel of St. Mary Magdalen, should have, hold, and enjoy, for himself and his successors, for ever, all and singular the portions, in which he had been so instituted. The ordination is remarkable. It allotted not a dead salary, or bare pecuniary pension, but standing provisions

* Mr. H. Norris has favoured me with another explanation of this term: he is inclined to think that the original name was Suthern, that is, South-cot, from *sub*, south, and *ern*, a cottage. It appears, he observes, to have been anciently, like many other suburbs, no more than a hamlet, and to have been united to the town by the gradual progress of building. This conjecture receives considerable weight from the irregularity of the borough in this part, several of the intermediate houses being in the parish of Wilton, and others in the tithing of Holway.

† "Walter Hafelshaw was first dean, then bishop of Wells; sat ten years, and lieth buried under a huge marble, in the body of the church towards the north, almost over against the pulpit. He made many statutes," which, Richardson adds, are yet in force. His election to the see of Wells was confirmed by the royal assent in 1302 the 30th of Edward I. Godwin's Catalogue of Bishops, p. 309. Richardson de Præsulibus Angliæ, p. 375.

of all the accommodations for human life, as meat, drink, house, corn, hay, &c. It is probable, that most other vicarages were endowed in the same way; that the vicar might be supported, in plenty and credit. Yet, for greater encouragement, there was usually added, as an overplus, a pension in money.

The ordination appointed, that the vicar should receive, every week throughout the year, twenty-one canonical loaves, to wit, three loaves a day; and forty-two flagons of conventual ale, to wit, six flagons a day*; and seven loaves of choice boulted flour, of the same weight as the canonical loaves; and twenty-eight loaves of fine wheat flour†; and seven flagons of brisk ale‡: and that he should receive every year, of the prior and convent, fifteen marks of silver; and six loads of hay (every year) and seven bushels of oats every week, for the support of his horse; and two shillings§ a year for shoeing his horse; and likewise all legacies bequeathed to him in the parish||: and that he should have the house and curtilage occupied by his predecessors: and that he should moreover receive, as an augmentation, two quarters of bread-corn yearly, from the grange or granary belonging to the priory: that the vicar, on his part, should, by himself or curates, at his proper charge, serve, or cause to be served, the chapels of St. Mary Magdalen, of Trendle**, of the Castle††, and of Fons St. George‡‡; and that he should find a resident

* By canonical loaves I understand the household bread used by the canons, and appointed by the rule of their order—by conventual ale the common beverage of the convent.

† Small loaves, or manchetts, which in those days were generally called chete bread.

‡ Ale of a superior quality, distinguished anciently by the name of Welch ale. It is to be noted, that at this period our ancestors were unacquainted with beer; the knowledge of which, together with the use of hops, appears to have been received from the Germans, about the middle of the reign of Henry VIII. See Spelman's Posthumous Works, by Gibson, p. 147.

§ The first shillings were coined by Henry VII. in 1505; but the term was used in computation for the twentieth part of a pound as early as the eleventh century.

|| Mortuaries, or bequests made to the church, in compensation of such tithes and oblations as the testators were supposed to have forgotten or neglected to pay.

** Now Trull; part of which constitutes at this day a tithing called North Trendle.—From whatever circumstance the parish derived its name, it is observable, that Trull and Trundle (from *trendel*, Sax. a bowl,) are words of the same import, signifying to roll or whirl.

†† Probably a chapel within the precincts of the castle of Taunton.

‡‡ Wilton; the manor of which is still called the manor of Fons George. The two names appear at first sight widely different; but if we consider that Wilton may be derived from *welle* and *tun*, i. e. Welltown, and that the church is dedicated to St. George, the

resemblance

resident curate for the chapel at Trendle, as soon as the parishioners should have provided a convenient habitation for him: but that, for the ease of the vicar, the prior should appoint, on separate stipends, one secular priest for the service of Stoke and Ruishton, another for the service of Staplegrove and St. James, and another for that of Bishops Hull; with this reservation, that on Sundays and solemn days, as often as occasion required, it should be lawful for the prior, with permission of his diocesan, to celebrate mass in the churches of Ruishton and St. James, by some of the friars belonging to the convent. This ordination was given at Taunton, the next Tuesday after the feast of All Saints, (Nov. 5,) 1308, and confirmed by the bishop at Chew, the next Wednesday after the feast of St. Martin, (Nov. 13,) in the same year. In 1314, it was proposed to make some amendment; and accordingly, John, then prior of Taunton, empowered friar Thomas de Sutton, one of his fellow-canons, by a letter of attorney, dated in the chapter of the convent at Taunton, the 4th of the nones of April, to consent to such regulations as the bishop, or his commissioners, should think proper to appoint. But it does not appear that any amendment was made; for the original ordination was confirmed at Wells, on the ides of April following, by John (de Drokenesford), then bishop of the diocese, and directed to be in all points inviolably observed*.

The date of this endowment probably gives the time when the church was built; at least, when the original part of the edifice was raised. For the two outer aisles, as appears from the date on the porch, were built (or perhaps one of them only, for there is a difference in the architecture) in 1508.

This church is a spacious, beautiful, gothic structure, with a fine, lofty, and strong tower of excellent workmanship, having four stately

resemblance is obvious. It is to be observed, that very small collections of houses were frequently denominated towns by our Saxon ancestors (so Riston, or Ruishton, from *riſc* or *ruſh*, i. e. Rushtown): and, in the time of the ancient Britons, even the woods, in which they fortified themselves against the attacks of their enemies, were honoured with that appellation. See Cæsar de Bel. Gal. lib. v.

* After the author had transcribed this appointment from the Magna Britannia and Mr. Locke's MS. he was furnished with a copy of the original ordination from the records of bp. Wickham, in the cathedral of Winchester: which has enabled him to state it more exactly and fully, and gives an authenticity and originality to this part of his work, which it would have otherwise wanted. He owes this to the polite and handsome communications of the present register to the bishop of Winchester, J. Ridding, esq;

pinnacles,

pinnacles, 32 feet high, which makes the whole height 153 feet.— This tower has thirteen handsome windows, with a variety of curious prominent ornaments, that give the whole an air of magnificence, united to a delicate elegance, not to be equalled in the county, nor perhaps in the kingdom. The cherubs, lions, sphinxes, and other enrichments, are much defaced; and the figures, that filled the niches round the tower, reported to have represented some of the primitive saints, with their cul de fours, are wholly destroyed; probably at the dissolution of monasteries, under Henry VIII. or in the civil wars of England, during the reign of Charles I. From the top of the tower is a most extensive and delightful prospect of the rich vale of Taunton Dean, of the gentlemen's seats, of the windings of the river, and of the country surrounded by the distant hills. The view takes in the pillar erected by the late earl of Chatham, at Burton Pynsent; Glastonbury Tor; and Alfred's Tower, at Stourhead, built by the late Mr. Hoare. The tower is furnished with a musical ring of six bells of great weight, and chimes that play "Britons strike home" every three hours. It was most probably erected by Henry VII. who, when he came to the crown, rebuilt many of the churches in Somersetshire, in the style of the florid gothic, in reward of the attachment of that county to the Lancastrian party, in the civil wars between York and Lancaster. This tower is a conspicuous example of that fashion, as are the towers of Gloucester cathedral, of a parochial church in Wells, and of the church of St. John, at Glastonbury*.

The inside of the church measures 98 feet by 86 feet in the widest part, and from the termination of that part to the altar 50 feet in length, contracting first into 56, and then into 17 feet, in breadth. The porch of the belfry, which forms the great entrance, is separated by a wainscot screen of elegant fret-work, in wood and iron, between the doors and at the ends of which arise, on the inside, neat Corinthian pilasters. The whole structure makes a grand appearance. Its curious roof is supported by twenty-four pillars, in four rows, dividing it into five aisles and a chancel. The body, or middle aisle, with the chancel and two adjoining aisles, appear to have been first erected: for the two outside aisles are in a different style of building; and the dates on several

* Warton's *Observations on the Fairy Queen of Spenser*, vol. II. p. 193.

monumental stones, in the middle part, are much prior to the fore-mentioned date, 1508, on the porch. In the center stands the desk and pulpit, beautifully enriched with carved work: the manner in which the canopy is supported has a pleasing effect. In the middle aisle, on the pillars between the upper windows, are twelve niches, six on a side, richly ornamented; and underneath, in one of the pillars, is a niche of larger dimensions. The former are supposed to have been occupied with images representing the apostles, and the latter with that of the patron. There are forty-four large windows to this church; on some of which are the remains of ancient painting on glass. It is adorned with a noble organ, built by subscription, in 1710; is neatly pewed, and the galleries are constructed to hold a great number of people.

The records* of the parish are repositd in the north-east part, where there is a small but neat vestry room: for the apartment over the south entrance or porch, called the Sanctum Sanctorum, has not, for time immemorial, been appropriated to any religious or parochial

* Among these records there is an old church book, on which are the following remarkable charges, and a curious inventory of the plate belonging to the church.

July 1, 1688. Paid for ringing on the thanksgiving day for the birth of the prince of Wales, £ 2 0 0

12 Jan. 1689. Paid Hillard (the parish sexton) for burying the church plate, 0 2 6 whose weight and inscriptions are as follows:

One large silver flaggon, weighing 77 oz. 5 p. having this inscription: "November the 20th, 1639. The gift of Mrs. Grace Portman to the parish of Taunton Magdalen, to be used at the communion for ever."

Two silver flaggons gilt, one weighing forty-three ounces, 5 dwt. the other weighing 44 oz. 10 dwts. having this inscription on each: "Ecclie parochiali Stæ. Mariæ Magdalenzæ de Taunton, ibi natus Guil. Smyth, S. T. P. coll. Wadhams, Oxon. nuper guardanus, in sacros ejus usus donavit."

Two silver chalices gilt, one weighing 20 oz. 10 dwts. the other weighing 20 oz. 15 dwts. having this inscription on each: "Deo et ecclesiæ sacrum. Robertus Hill, Londinensis, olim hujus parochiæ alumnus, dedit hunc calicem piæ memoriæ ergo." One dated October 4th, 1630, the other October 25, 1639.

The covers of the chalices have these letters, I H S, on their tops, and weigh, one 8 oz. 10 dwts. the other 9 oz.

The covers of the three flaggons have these letters, I H S, engraven in a glory.

A silver salver, weighing 18 oz. 2 dwts. with this inscription: "Christo et ecclesiæ sacra. Burgus et villa de Taunton. Patinam hancce publico sumptu obtulerunt hujusce ecclesiæ guardiani, in festo pascha, anno Domini, 1699."

All these pieces of plate have a castle engraven on them, and the great flaggon hath a flower de luce in its bottom, between the letters G. P. 1639. Mr. Locke's MS.

use.

use. The enclosure on the north-west is used by the archdeacon of Taunton, when he keeps his courts.

The other church, dedicated to St. James, though every way inferior to St. Mary Magdalen, is nevertheless a strong, plain, ancient building, with a good ring of five bells. It is well pewed. Near the top of the tower, from whence also there is a fine prospect of the river and country, are two niches filled with images, which have been called Adam and Eve; though some suppose that they represent St. John and St. James; or perhaps St. Peter and St. Paul, to whom the priory, founded long before this church was built, was dedicated. It is conceived, that it was erected sometime in the 13th century*.

Of the dissenting meeting houses or chapels, in this town, the oldest and largest is that called, from the street in which it stands, Paul's Meeting. Its front is extensive, reaching from north to south 62 feet. In it are three folding doors. This structure bears some resemblance, in the form of it, to a Roman capital T. The horizontal line constitutes the body of the building, being, inclusive of the walls, 51 feet broad; and from nearly the middle of it projects a wing, almost behind the pulpit, 36 feet long and 21 feet wide, answering to the perpendicular stroke of a T. Before it is an area of 122 feet wide, planted with a row of lime trees.

The dissenters, who must, it appears from the size of this building, have been then very numerous, availed themselves of the respite they enjoyed from an harassed and persecuted state, by the indulgence of Charles II. to raise this place of worship in 1672. The conveyance of the plot of ground, on which it stands, is dated May 10, 1672, 24 Charles II. and, on a piece of wood towards the street, the figures 1672 are carved: which circumstances point out the commencement of the society†. Amidst the confusion and outrages which were the consequences of the duke of Monmouth's feeble and vain efforts, the congregation was broken up; and the seats, stairs, and galleries, being torn up, were converted into a bonfire. Sometime between 1675 and 1677, a proposal was made to turn the building into a workhouse, and a vestry was called for the purpose. A friend of the dissenters

* Locke's MS.

† On the information of Mr. John Hayne Bovet.

recommended it to the vestry, to consider of their design. When it was observed, that no person laid any claim to it, and that in its present state it was of no use; he replied, "A claim may be laid to it upon a proper occasion." This stopt the proceedings.

This proper occasion seemed to offer in a few years. Upon king James's dispensation, the dissenters resumed spirit, and put their chapel in order again; and Mr. Warren and Mr. Hartford were chosen co-pastors. Soon after, a person of some note dying, Mr. Hartford proposed his being interred in it; as that might effectually prevent the building's being turned to another use. For he conceived, that more reverence would be paid to it as a repository of the dead, than from its being looked upon as a conventicle of schismatics*. Many have been since interred in it, and behind the building lies a spacious burying-ground.

The next place of worship, belonging to the protestant dissenters, is that called the New Meeting, situated in Tancred-street. The dimensions of this chapel, which is a neat, plain, and uniform building, are, exclusively of the walls, about 33 feet in front, and 49 feet 8 inches in depth. Before it is an area, planted with a row of lime trees, 28 feet deep. This structure, as its name imports, was erected long since the former, early in the spring of 1732. It owed its origin to an attempt made by the friends of the late Dr. Amory, to fix him as an assistant to Mr. Batson, their aged minister; which was opposed by him and the majority of the people. The freedom with which Mr. Amory avowed his sentiments, that greatly deviated from the orthodox standard, was, on the side of Mr. Batson's friends, a ground of prejudice against him, and with others, who were disposed to think liberally, a cause of attachment. But in this instance, as is frequently the case, other considerations, if they did not kindle religious zeal, blended their influence with it. Mr. Batson was not willing to relinquish any part of the salary†. The separation, though it arose, at least in part, from a trait of character we must censure, and, as it forms a part of a minister's character, particularly lament, gave occasion for opening a place of worship, where a strain of preaching, leading to exalted

* On the information of Mr. Irwin.

† Biographia Britannica, vol. I. article Amory.

sentiments of the divine benevolence, and devotions addressed solely to one object, the *One God and Father of all*, have met with the support of, though not a large, yet, an harmonious and respectable society.

The third structure devoted to religion is the chapel of the *Baptists*, in this town; which is a large, expensive, and handsome building, erected in 1721. The dimensions of it, inclusively of the walls, are 54 feet by 49 feet. The roof is supported by two strong and curious pillars of the Corinthian order. The pulpit and the stair-case are enriched with elegant carved work. The fronts of the galleries and pews are made of Flemish oak; which gives to the whole a neat and handsome appearance. The seats are judiciously arranged, so as to make the access to them perfectly easy, and to give every hearer a view of the preacher. It is remarkable for not having one double pew in it; which at once preserves a beautiful uniformity, and secures the people from the unpleasant and unbecoming situation, to which double pews expose part of an auditory, that of staring in each others faces, and sitting with their backs to the preacher. It is also exempted from the inconveniences of a practice which must often prove offensive and dangerous; that of converting the temple of the living God into a burying-place: for only one family has been permitted to be interred in it. It is furnished with one large and handsome brass chandelier, and two small ones: and, for the communion, there is a complete and rich service of plate, consisting of two plates for the bread, two flagons for the wine, and four cups with feet to serve it round to the communicants; the bequest of Mr. Samuel Noble, attorney at law, in 1745; with a pair of candlesticks, with snuffers and dish, the legacy of his mother, Mrs. Jane Noble, in 1777. Before this edifice is an area, 9 feet wide; and behind it a commodious burying-ground.

This building was raised by the generous and sole exertions of the society, nearly on the spot where the old meeting-house stood. A society of baptists existed, in this town, so far back as the year 1646. Some peculiar sentiments and practices, with respect to the institution of baptism, as the name denotes, distinguish this congregation from other protestant dissenters. They apprehend that what is called *infant-baptism* has no foundation in the New Testament; because there does not occur there any precept enjoining it, nor any example of the practice,

practice, to give it a sanction; consequently that it is no institution of Christ. It is also their opinion, that had the word βαπτίζω, expressing the initiatory ordinance of the christian religion, been translated, it must have been rendered to dip, or *immerse*: they, therefore, in the administration of this ordinance, lay the whole body under water and raise it up again. In other points, this denomination of christians formerly agreed with other protestant dissenters, particularly in adopting the gloomy system of Calvinism, and the absurd notions of the trinitarian scheme. Though there were, originally, in this town, a body of them, who discarded the sentiments of Calvin, concerning the power of human will, and were called *Free-willers*; who, being reduced to a few men and women, were united to the other society of baptists, in 1722. This society, since that time, has assumed a liberal cast: as knowledge and free enquiry have advanced, they have adopted sentiments more consonant to the benevolence, and more consistent with the unity of the Divine Being, than were the doctrinal principles on which they were first formed into a church. Enlarged principles form their creed: on the *unitarian* plan of devotion, in which all prayers are addressed to *One God and Father of all*, in the name of Jesus Christ, is their worship conducted: and their communion is open to christians who differ from them on the questions concerning the mode and subjects of baptism.

Another place of worship, in this town, belongs to the Quakers; situated towards the west end of Hunt's-court. Its dimensions are 54 feet by 27 feet. The ground was the gift of Mr. Robert Button, and the building was erected in 1693. With the galleries it will hold a great number of people, and is kept, according to the pleasing taste of that respectable body of christians, very clean and neat; but does not seem to have been substantially built.

The only structure, devoted to religion, which remains to be noticed, is the Octagon Chapel, built in 1778, situated in Middle-street, St. James's, and is under the direction of the Rev. John Wesley. It is a neat building, 40 feet in diameter, conveniently pewed. Twelve handsome windows, six of which are circular, render it light and chearful. It is furnished with a curious time-piece, and accommodated with a good vestry-room. Before it is
a spacious

a spacious court, enclosed towards the street with a large iron gate and palisades.

The second class of public buildings, viz. those which have been erected for the purposes of charity, are the Free-School, Alms-Houses, the Parish Work-Houses, and the Hospital.

The first place, in our review of the structures erected by private munificence to the public utility, must be given to the Free-Grammar-School; both on account of the antiquity and the object of it, as it is consecrated to literature. It is a large and strong building, and adjoining to it is a house for the master. It was founded by Richard Fox, bishop of Winchester, as appears by an authentic register, kept in Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Above the entrance are the arms of that bishop, viz. Azure; a pelican with wings disclosed, vulned, and feeding her young: and the arms of Hugh Oldham, bishop of Exeter; Sable; a chevron, or, between three owls, proper; and in a chief, argent, three roses, gules.

This school was endowed by William Walbee, who, in his last will, dated July 1553, and proved in the prerogative court, Feb. 1, 1554, gave four hundred marks to be laid out in lands. By a deed dated June 12, in the same year, William Pool, of Colyford, esq; granted all those messuages, cottages, lands, tenements, and hereditaments, commonly called Coffins, Hays, and Castle, in the parish of Hawkchurch, in the county of Dorset, to Sir John Portman, knight, lord chief justice of England, Henry Portman, esq; Thomas White, clerk, L.L.D. (who was elected Sept. 11, 1553, and resigned 1573,) warden of New College, in Oxford; Robert Marwent, S. T. P. clerk, president* of Corpus Christi College, in Oxford; Edward Fryar, Henry Bayley, William Hill, and Robert Hill, of Taunton, gentlemen, as trustees in trust, to the sole use of a school-master, living within the free-school of Taunton, to be named by the warden of New College, in Oxford, and his successors, for ever†.

Of the alms-houses, in Taunton, only two of them are, at present, endowed. Of these the largest is that founded by Robert Gray, esq;

* He was the second president, sworn Nov. 26, 1537, died Aug. 25, 1558, and was buried in the college chapel, near John Claymond, his predecessor. Locke's MS.

† Locke's MS.

and situated at East-gate. It is in length 130 feet, having, besides the chapel and school-room, seventeen separate apartments, with a small garden belonging to each. On the front of this house are two coats of arms; one of the founder, viz. Barry of six pieces, argent and azure; on a bend, gules, three annulets, or. The other of the merchant-taylor's company, in London, of which he was a member.

The following inscription, on a stone in the front of the building, records the commencement of this charitable institution, and the general design of the founder.

“ Laus Deo. This charitable work is founded by Robert Graye, “ of the cittie of London, esquier, borne in this towne, in the house “ adjoyning hereunto, who in his life time doth erect it for tenn “ poore, aged syngle women; and for their competent livelihood, and “ daylie prayers in the same, provided sufficient maintenance for the “ same. 1635.”

The nature of this maintenance, and the extent to which the charity was afterwards carried, are represented on a tablet set up in the church in the year 1751. It relates, that Robert Gray, of London, merchant, gave to the parish of Taunton St. Mary Magdalen, an alms-house for six poor men and a reader, and ten poor women, with an house, orchard, and garden adjoining to the said alms-house: and also 2000l. to be laid out in land fee-simple, the profits thereof to be paid to the poor persons by 8s. to each person the first monday monthly, and a gown every three years; and also enjoined the said reader* to teach ten poor children to read and write.

Mr. Gray, in his own life-time, besides having purchased the ground for his alms-house, and erected the chapel and the apartments for the women and the reader, had also named his trustees; but as he died before his will was perfected and executors appointed, the heir at law took to his estate: this led Mr. Robert Moggridge, at that time mayor of Taunton, to make an application to chancery, to have that part of Mr. Gray's will, which related to the finishing and endowment of his alms-house, in this town, carried into full effect. Accordingly (as the merchant-taylors company, to whom Mr. Gray

* Who, in the decree of chancery, is styled chaplain or schoolmaster.

left the government of his institution, on account of the distance, and because no emolument was to be allowed for the trouble of the direction, declined the trust) this alms-house was settled, by the authority of Edward, lord Lyttelton, and by a decree of chancery, on persons residing in Taunton, in trust, to the uses of the will. To them was paid the 2000*l.* for the purpose of purchasing lands ; the neat rent of which, and, in the mean time, the interest of the monies, were wholly to be applied to the support of the foundation. The number of trustees is twenty ; who, from the produce of the monies, partly laid out on lands, and partly invested on government and other securities, fulfil the will of the donor as far as relates to the support of the house, the payment of the pensions, and teaching the children to read. When by death the number of trustees is reduced to eight, those eight surviving trustees are empowered and enjoined to elect twelve others*.

In 1735, a charitable commission, which was obtained for making enquiries into the management of this and other charities, in the county of Somerset, brought on, against Mr. Gray's trustees, a suit in chancery, which expended 200*l.* of their fund. The loss that the original stock thus incurred, was, to a great degree, made good by the generosity of Mr. John Noble, merchant, at Bristol, and Mr. John Coles, fuller, both natives of Taunton, and the last a resident in it : the former of whom endowed this charitable institution with 100*l.* the other with 50*l.*

* The above particulars were communicated by Mr. John Way, from a copy of the decree of chancery. Mr. Gray, it appears from a copy of his will, in Mr. Way's possession, left 200*l.* to the town of Beverley, in Yorkshire, upon condition to pay to the town of Holden, in the same county, 6*l.* yearly, for ever, to the relief of the poor of the same town, payable yearly at the fair holden in that town ; and that the town of Beverley should give security to the town of Holden, for the performance of the yearly payments of the 6*l.* for ever. He also bequeathed to the right worshipful the company of merchant-taylors, in London, 1000*l.* that they should for ever pay to 12 poor alms-women, living in the alms-house newly erected in or near East-Smithfield, in London, 8*s.* 2-piece monthly, the first monday of every month ; and should also give every third year, to every of these alms women, a good cloth gown, at the price of 9*s.* per yard at least ; the same cloth to be of good sad new colour, with a cognizance of silver of his arms as they then had. Among other legacies, Mr. Gray left to the merchant-taylors company, for a dinner on the day of his funeral, 40*l.* to his parishioners 200*l.* for a dinner, for them and their wives, on the day of his funeral ; to his workfolks, viz. the calenders and cottoners, 60*l.* for a dinner on the day of his funeral, for them and their wives ; and to his other workmen 13*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*

The other alms-house, which has a fund for its support, is situated on the north side of Hammet-street, and derives its name from its founder, Richard Huish, esq; who was of the family of the Huishes of Doniford, in the county of Somerset, and Sand, in the parish of Sidbury, in the county of Devon. It is a large, good house. The front of it is about 95 feet in length, and has on it the following coat of arms, viz. Quarterly; first and fourth, argent; on a bend, sable, three fishes of the field: second and third, argent; a fess lozengy, sable. The crest is an elephant's head argent, armed and crowned with a ducal coronet, or.

The building is laid out into a chapel and thirteen separate rooms, for thirteen poor, needy, maimed, impotent, or aged men, who have been of honest fame and good report, especially true working or labouring people, who have been brought up in some manual occupation, husbandry, or daily labour. One of the most discreet of this number, who can write and read English, it is appointed by the will, shall be president or reader; and to him is assigned the upper chamber next to the study, a room appropriated for keeping the records, accounts, and other matters concerning the hospital. The pension of the president 3s. 4s. and that of each of the other twelve 2s. 8d. per week, to be paid by a treasurer, who is appointed to receive 103l. per annum, a ground-rent charged on houses in Black-Friars, London. The surplus of this ground-rent, and the income of the large house adjoining to the alms-house, are assigned to the repairs of the building and the purchase of cloth, to be made up into gowns or coats: that for the president to be made of three yards of broad lion tawny cloth, of London measure, at 8s. per yard, lined with black cotton or other light stuff, at the price in the whole of 5s. for the said lining; and the gowns of the other twelve to be made of the same cloth, at 6s. 8d. per yard, lined as aforesaid.

The direction of this institution is invested in twenty-two governors*, who must be gentlemen resident in Taunton, or within twelve miles of

* The first governors, appointed by Mr. Huish's will, were Sir Henry Portman, of Orchard, bart. Sir George Speke, of Whitelackington, knt. Sir Nicholas Halfwell, of Halfwell, knt. John Poulett, of George-Hinton, esq; John Mallet, of Enmore, esq; Edward Rogers, of Cannington, esq; Sir Bartholomew Michel, knt. Sir George Farewell, of Hill-Bishops, knt. John

of it. When that number is reduced, by death, to sixteen, the survivors, it is appointed, shall elect others in their room. The power of electing persons into the house, and of discharging them from it, lieth with any nine governors, acting with the advice of the vicar. The will of the donor directs, that the minister shall, on the first Sunday in every quarter, examine, in the church, the several persons admitted, with regard to their progress in the divine life; in order, with the concurrence of eight governors, to expel the profane and unteachable. For which office he is to receive 6s. 8d. and the clerk 1s. per quarter.

The like examination is also required previously to the admission of any pensioner, who is at the same time openly to promise obedience to the president. The election of poor men is limited, besides the qualifications before stated, to such as are unmarried, of full threescore years of age, incapable of procuring a livelihood by any trade or labour, not having a certainty of 50s. per year, having lived full seven years in either of the parishes of St. Mary Magdalen or St. James, Taunton; free from any infectious disease, leprosy, venereal distemper, or lunacy; and who have not been convicted of any notorious crime. And if at any time there should not be found, in those parishes, persons strictly qualified according to these limitations, then the election to be made out of the neighbouring parishes of Kingston, Trull, Wilton, Staplegrave, and Hill-Bishops, of poor old men so qualified. In any case, a preference, it is enjoined, should be given to any of the

John Fraunceis, of Combflory, esq; Richard Warr, of Hestercombe, esq; Thomas Warr, of Taunton, esq; John Sinms, of Poundisford, esq; John Coles, of Barton, esq; Alexander Brett, of Taunton, esq; Humphrey Windome, of Wiveliscomb, esq; Thomas Brererton, of Yard, esq; George Doddington, of Doddington, esq; Robert Cuffe, of Creech, esq; James Clarke, of Norton-Fitzwarren, esq; Rowland Huish, of Sand, Devon, esq; Robert Hill, of Holway-Lane, near Taunton, gent. and Roger Prowse, of Taunton, gent. The will directed, that nearly as could be the number of sixteen governors should be always kept up, to be chosen for ever out of the families, or of the heirs of the preceding gentlemen, being thirty years old at least; or in default of any of these houses, then the choice to be made of some gentlemen's houses, within ten miles of Taunton, not being any of the devisees for the time being. If any doubt or question should arise, upon any clause or article of the will, the determination on it is left with the majority of the governors, or at least eight of them; or, if they cannot agree, with the vicar or chief minister of St. Mary Magdalen, Taunton; or, in default of his determination, with the bishop of Bath and Wells, whose decision should be binding; or, if he declines giving his opinion, the appeal is to be made to the lord chancellor.

kindred.

kindred of the donor, born within the counties of Somerset and Devon, and fallen into want. The election is to be made openly in the church of St. Mary Magdalen, by at least nine governors, with the vicar; to be signed by all; registered by the president; and a copy of this register, specifying, from time to time, the names, ages, elections, removals, and deaths, of the pensioners, to be given to the constables, and two of the chief officers of the town, and to the vicar, to be deposited with the records of the town and parish. The regulations of the donor's will, with respect to the government of his hospital, are strict; forbidding the pensioners, under the penalty of an expulsion, to harbour or lodge, in their apartment, any woman, child, or other person whatever; to carry on any noisome or offensive trade, or victualling or selling of beer; or to play at cards, dice, or any unlawful game; or to haunt any alehouse or suspected place: and enjoining on them a peaceable, forbearing deportment towards one another; requiring an attendance, in their livery gowns, at common prayers and sermons, if there be any, morning and evening, every Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday, and holidays, at St. Mary Magdalen, sitting and kneeling in some place, appointed by the churchwardens, near the donor's grave, under the penalty of forfeiting, in default of such attendance, unless through sickness or just cause to be allowed by the vicar, 6d. out of his weekly wages for every offence, to be paid to the clerk of the parish; and enacting, on the days when they are not bound to attend at the church of St. Mary Magdalen, prayers in the hospital, with the reading of two chapters in the bible by the president, at a convenient time, every morning and evening.

Mr. Huish, before the date of his will, Jan. 30, 1615, had begun to build and had finished his alms-house: by this deed he appointed the governors, established the rules, and provided for the support of his charitable institution. Soon after this he died. His benevolent design, however, took effect, and continued in force till the dreadful fire, which laid waste the metropolis in the year 1666, destroyed the premises on which the income of the hospital was raised; and no profit accrued for the support of the charity. In the year 1672, an inquiry into the state of it was taken, at Clifford's Inn, on Dec. 11. The situation, boundaries, and abutments of the premises were ascertained, and

and were again vested, by a decree of chancery, in trustees, according to the direction of the will. In little more than sixty years the institution was again suffered to run into decay. The person, to whom the lands belonging to it were leased, was permitted to neglect the premises and the payment of the rents, so that the number of the pensioners was reduced to three, and their pay lessened from 2s. 8d. to 2s. 6d. per week; besides that the parish of St. Mary Magdalen had expended 80l. and St. James, 40l. in support of the hospital. This situation of the charity being discovered by a charitable commission in 1735, a decree of chancery, dated June 1, that year, appointed that the number of the governors should be filled up, inclusive of five persons residing in or near London, and the original endowment re-established; and empowered the governors to allow their agent, in London, instead of 40s. yearly appointed for his trouble by Mr. Huish's will, 1s. out of every 20s. clear money he should pay unto them*.

Opposite the west end of St. Mary Magdalen, there very lately stood another alms-house, consisting of eighteen separate rooms. It was founded by Dorothy Henley, in 1637; but has, for many years at least, been destitute of any funds, either for the maintenance of its inhabitants or the repairs of the building. It is supposed to have been originally endowed; and, on the testimony of some very aged persons, it is said, that two estates, one in Bishops Hull, and the other in Ash Priors, called late Henley's, were settled on it. There was lately a woman, upwards of eighty, who, when a child about twelve years of age, was a constant attendant upon an old man, her great-uncle, named John Matthews, and a resident in the house, that remembered having herself received, with other inhabitants of it, 1s. 6d. each, every

* Besides the endowment of this hospital, Mr. Huish left, from his estates in Black-Friars, 100l. yearly towards the maintenance of five of the name of Huish, nearest in blood; in default of such, then those of his name and kindred; in default of these, then those of his kindred; and in default of such also, then again others born in the county of Somerset, who had learnt their grammar; to be scholars at one of the universities of Oxford or Cambridge; to each 20l. to be students there; provided that they proceed within two years to the study of divinity, and to be enjoyed till they became bachelors in divinity, or fellows of houses, so that the benefit of the house should be treble to his exhibition; or should marry, or be promoted to a benefice.

The above particulars, concerning Mr. Huish's foundation and will, are taken from Mr. Locke's MS. and from copies of the will and of the decree in chancery, communicated by Mr. John Badcock.

saturday morning, paid by a person who usually wore a gold-laced waistcoat. The arms on the front*, though much defaced, were the same with those on the two farm houses†. But the inscription on a stone adjoining to the arms gave no countenance to the supposition of its having been originally endowed, whatever benefactions some benevolent persons may, at any time, have bestowed on the residents in it. Time had for many years rendered this inscription illegible; but from a record of a copy of it, taken on May 7, 1694, by Mr. Samuel Dell, we are enabled to give it to the public. It ran thus: “Mrs. Dorothy Henley, of this town, widow, did, in her life-time, at her own proper cost and charges, erect and build these 18 alms-houses, to remain in perpetuity, to and for the use of such poor people of the borough and parish of Taunton Magdalen, as shall be placed in the same, from time to time, for ever hereafter, by Robert Henley, esq; and his heirs. Anno Domini, 1649 ‡.”

The apartments for a number of years had been occupied by paupers, placed in them by the overseers of the parish. The buildings, through the want of a fund appropriated to their repair, were in a ruinous state; and, through the nastiness and number of its inhabitants, the house was become a public nuisance; peculiarly offensive from its situation near the center of the town, and in the great path to the church. It had therefore, years before, been in contemplation to pull down this house, but without effect, till in August, 1787. When it appeared, at a public vestry, on an estimate delivered in on the oaths of two builders, that the necessary repairs would require 100l. On the credit of the vote of the vestry engaging to pay him that sum, Sir Benjamin Hammet, the representative of the town, purchased and fitted up, at his own expence, for the use of the parish, in the room of Henley's alms-house, more commodious tenements, to receive a

* There are no records of the Henley family in this house: but there is an inscription on a flat stone near the font, in St. Mary Magdalen's church, of which the following is a copy “Under this stone lyeth entombed the body of John Henley, gent. and citizen of London. whose grandfather suffered for religion in queen Mary's days, and he hath left behind him Mrs. Eliz. Henley, his second wife: deceased 6th of August, Ann. Dom. 1622.” Locke's MS.

† Locke's MS.

‡ Communicated by Mr. John Way, from an account of the charities belonging to the poor of Taunton, copied from an ancient register, marked on the back Taunton St. Mary Magdalene, 1671.”

greater number of poor, in Holway-lane, East-streech, on a spot more healthy and more remote from public view, to bear the name of "Henley's alms-house."

There is another alms-house, eastward of that founded by Mr. Gray, consisting of fourteen separate rooms. This is not at present endowed: and it is uncertain by whom it was originally founded. If a tradition preserved among some old people merit credit, it was the gift of Mrs. Grace Portman, of Orchard Portman; who left an estate in Cornwall to support it. In the civil wars of Charles I. as it adjoined to East-gate, it suffered much; and great part of it was burnt by lord Goring. It was afterwards rebuilt by one Pope, from whom it was called Pope's alms-house*.

In Little-Magdalen-lane there is a range of small tenements, of which no more is known, than what is found in an ancient parish book. On the first page of which is the following order; viz. It was ordered by an act of vestry, held in the parish church of Taunton St. Mary Magdalen, on Easter-monday, 1671, that a list of the public charities, given to the poor of Taunton, be entered into a book, to be kept for the purpose in the parish chest, amongst the records of the parish: in which book is a memorandum, "That seventeen houses in Little-Magdalen-lane, and two in Saint Paul's-street, have been standing time out of mind, and have been constantly repaired by the feoffees of the town lands, and that the constables of the borough have always had the placing and displacing the poor there†."

Amongst the structures devoted to the relief and accommodation of the indigent must be reckoned the two work-houses; one near St. Mary Magdalen's church, built at the expence of the parish; the other in East-streech, part of which is very ancient, and in which a large number of poor are supported‡.

The

* Locke's MS.

† Id.

‡ From an old book kept in this house are copied the following receipts, with a view to promote an enquiry into the present state of those charities. They are all dated the same year.

1667. Received of Mr. William Bacon, the sum of 4l. 11s. which was a legacy given by Edm. Graham, deceased, for the use of the parish of St. James, and is distributed according to his will. In 1678 this interest was increased to five pounds per annum.

Received of Mr. Thomas Godfall, the sum of twenty shillings, given by will to the poor of the parish of St. James, by Mr. Florence Stone, deceased, and is distributed according to the same.

The last edifice, which has charity for its object, is the hospital, which is the most capital of its kind in the county of Somerset. It stands on a delightful eminence, at a proper distance from the town, in the midst of a large plot of garden ground ; and is open, on every side, to the healthy air of the surrounding country. It is a square building, extending 90 feet on a side, and having semi-circular entrances, that lead to a suit of rooms, and meet in a circular, open court, in the center, 13 feet in diameter. The ground floor is divided into various apartments, common to any house, or peculiarly necessary for an infirmary. The second and third stories consist of wards for the patients, and of other rooms and chambers, which the nature of the building requires; so as to form, on the whole, a large and very commodious hospital ; and contrived to admit, through every part, a free circulation of fresh air.

The foundation corner-stone of this building was laid by Lord North, attended by several noblemen, and a numerous company of the gentry and clergy of the neighbourhood, and of the respectable inhabitants of the town, on Michaelmas-day, 1772. The following graven inscription was laid in the stone :

“ On the day of the feast of Saint Michael and all angels, in the year of our Lord Christ, MDCCLXXII, this stone was laid, the chief corner-stone of a general hospital, for the relief of the sick poor. The Lord giveth medicine to heal their sickness. Stowey and Jones, architects.”

With joy and the diffusive glow of benevolence was the foundation-stone laid. With great and pleasing expectation was the structure seen to rise. And in the year 1774 was the building covered in. Here the pen must stop ; it can carry the history of the noble institution, to which the structure was destined, no further. It wishes to record

Received of Widow Hooper, two pounds and ten shillings, being a gift to the poor of the parish of St. James, by Mr. Warman, deceased, and is disposed of according to the intent of his will.

Received of Sir William Portman, knt. and bart. his yearly gift of two pounds and five shillings.

Received of Sir John Warr, knt. his yearly gift to the poor, one pound.

Received of Mr. Farewell, his yearly gift to the poor, 8 shillings.

Received of John Slape, gent. 5l. 15s. for the interest of one hundred pounds, given by Mr. Clark, deceased, towards the relief of the poor.

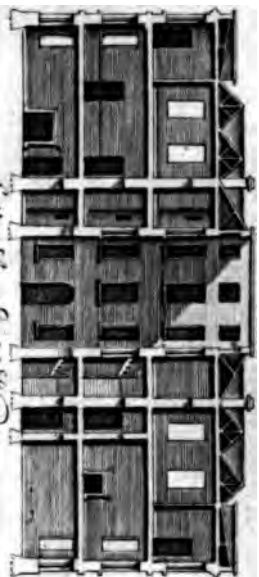
Received the rent of the parish meadow, 1l. 10l. Locke's MS.

that

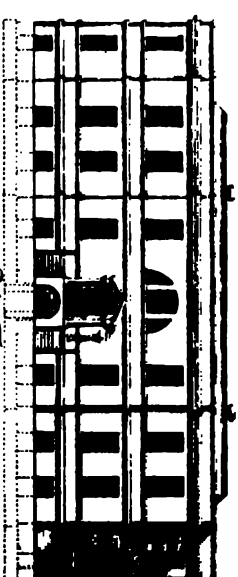
The Plan, Elevation & Section of the GENERAL HOSPITAL

AT TAUNTON.

Designed for the Library of Theology.



View from East to West

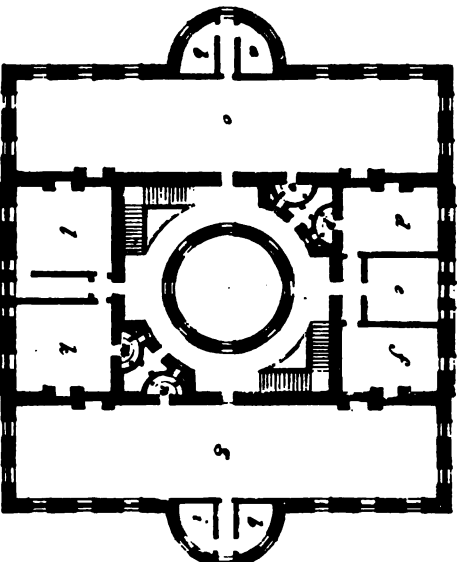


North Front

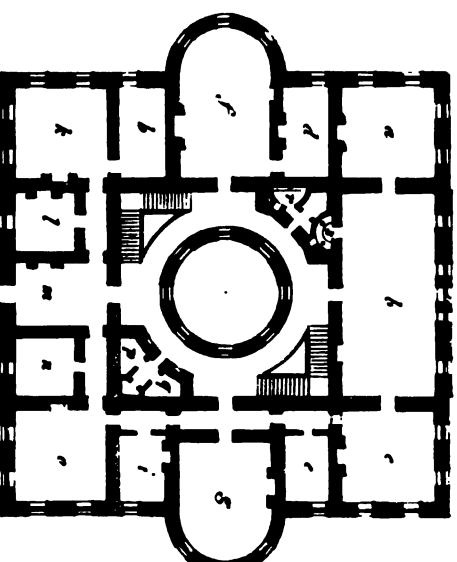
a. Kitchen room.	f. Ward	l. Operating Room
b. Large room.	g. Ward	m. Kitchen
c. Ward	h. Kitchen room	n. Water-closet
d. Ward	i. Large room	o. Water-closet
e. Grounded bed room	k. Ward	p. Water-closet

a. Ward	g. Ward	n. Grounding Room
b. Ward	h. Kitchen bed room	o. Kitchen bed room
c. Ward	i. Kitchen	p. Small bed room
d. Kitchen	k. Kitchen room	q. Small bed room
e. Kitchen bed room	l. Kitchen bed room	r. Water-closet
f. Kitchen bed room	m. Water-closet	s. Water-closet

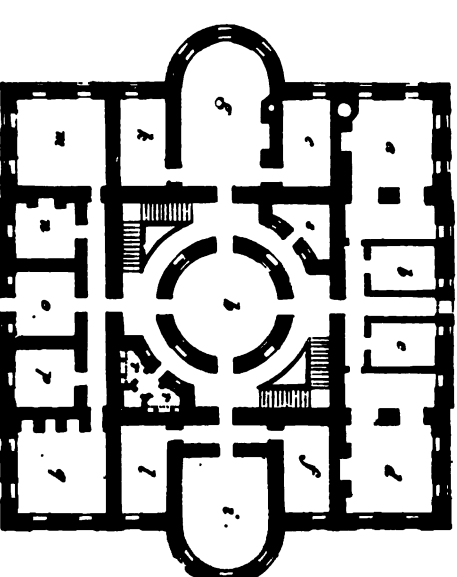
a. Kitchen room	g. Kitchen	n. Grounding Room
b. Kitchen	h. Kitchen	o. Kitchen
c. Kitchen	i. Kitchen	p. Kitchen
d. Kitchen	k. Kitchen	q. Kitchen
e. Kitchen	l. Kitchen	r. Kitchen
f. Kitchen	m. Kitchen	s. Kitchen



Second Chamber Plan



First Chamber Plan



Ground Plan



that its apartments were finished, and that its doors were opened to afford relief to pain and sickness. But for many years has it now stood a monument of what the humanity of the county once felt : of what its charity once planned. Some fatal incident has blasted the hopes of the afflicted. It was formed, perhaps, on too large a scale ; the expences of which have exhausted even the liberal resources and active spirit, with which the undertaking commenced : the cost and time bestowed in rearing so large a building, protracting the operation of the design, in the actual relief of the afflicted, has permitted the ardor of some to cool ; and the undue proportion of expence, which has been suffered to fall on a few gentlemen, may have damped the zeal of its most active friends, and changed it into disgust. In a course of years, many, who first entered into the design with warmth and generosity, have died ; but as many of its first patrons still survive, benevolence would hope that it is not too late to correct past errors. The greatest part of the expence has been already incurred and discharged. No great exertions are necessary to do justice to those who have borne too unequal a share therein, to cancel the remaining debt, and to open one ward at least for the reception of patients. Every year's neglect now tends to throw into a state of ruin an edifice, which was erected for the service of humanity. It is too elevated not to attract notice : but while it draws on it the eye of every traveller, its situation speaks a language which impeaches the wisdom, justice, and humanity of the county. The reflection, though general, will not lie so large, but every traveller, who has learned the names of the gentlemen in the county, will apply it to each individual*.

But

* As there are many charitable donations, not connected with the buildings above described, it may be proper to exhibit a distinct detail of them here.

The most ancient of these is that of Simon Saunders, of Taunton, gent. who, by his last will, bearing date April 21, in the 33d year of queen Elizabeth, and in the year of our Lord 1591, left "one hundred pounds, to be employed in such sort, that the yearly profit arising from the same should be annually laid out in woollen cloth, and the same be disposed and delivered to certain poor inhabitants of the borough of Taunton Magdalene, for the time being, upon the 17th day of November, for ever." After his decease, his brother, Mr. Christopher Saunders, with 80l. of this sum, purchased of John Towse, of Stockland, gent. a burgage, messuage, or tenement, with all its appurtenances, in the borough of Taunton, bounded on the north by the land of Sir Hugh Portman, on the south by the Shambles, on the west by the Guildhall of the borough, and on the east by a little street, called

But the writer will perhaps be thought to have forgotten his task ; which is not to declaim, but narrate. The object is important, and justifies his feelings : this must be his apology. He will now return to, and prosecute his account of, the public buildings in Taunton.

The next class includes those which are employed for the purposes of justice and civil government. The principal of these, both for magnitude and use, is the Assize-Hall, which forms part of the castle, adjoining the town, though situated in the parish of Bishops Hull.

The original foundation of this ancient castle, as has been said before, was laid by king Ina. The present owes its erection and repairs

Shamble-lane, which extended from the Cornhill (now called the Parade) to the south side of Fore-street. He afterwards bestowed the sum of 33*l.* in redemption of one lease of the said premises, and in converting them into and building three ranks of shambles, which came to be called "The New Shambles," and made twelve standings for butchers, containing in length 30½ feet, and in breadth 30 feet. Further to effect the good purposes of his brother's will, this Mr. Christopher Saunders, by a deed dated Dec. 30, in the 41st year of queen Elizabeth, and in the year of Christ 1599, conveyed those ranks of shambles into the hands of seven trustees ; that the yearly neat produce, after the deduction of ordinary repairs, and 6*s.* 8*d.* should be applied to the purchase of woollen cloth, to be made into waistcoats and stockings, and to be distributed yearly on the 17th of November, or within three days before and after, to the poor people of the borough of Taunton. The same deed empowered and directed the surviving trustees, when any four were dead, to nominate and elect seven other persons, "of the best or better sort of the inhabitants of the borough of Taunton Magdalen," to be substituted in the place of the former trustees. The 6*s.* 8*d.* mentioned to be deducted from the yearly rent of these invested shambles, was directed to be applied to discharge any expences a feoffee might incur, by the purchase and distribution of the woollen cloth. The deed likewise allowed and appointed a deduction of 20*s.* and of that sum only, for the expences of a new feoffment*.

The act of parliament for erecting a market-house, and holding a market, passed in 1769, empowered the trustees under that act to purchase all the interest, &c. in the lands and erections on the ground, where the market-house was to be built. In pursuance of such powers, the same trustees bought of the surviving trustees of Saunders' charity the said three ranks of shambles, &c. for 30*l.* For many years they had been unoccupied, because an idea prevailed that persons could purchase provisions much cheaper at the outer and moveable standings, than at those of Saunders' charity ; and consequently little or no advantage accrued from them†.

Though Saunders' benefaction is the earliest donation now on record, yet it appears that various houses and lands must have been devised before that period : and, after a great sickness called the Plague, different houses and lands having lain unoccupied, some gentlemen of the town had seized them for a future heir : after they had been kept a long time, with this view, no claimant appearing, the neat rents were applied to the relief of the poor. At length, June 9, 1610, a bill in chancery was preferred, by Mr. Thomas Fisher and others, of Taunton, against Alexander Hill, the treasurer, to account for the rents and profits. It stated that divers messuages, lands, and tenements, situated in Taunton St. Mary Magdalen and St.

* From the trust-deed of April 8, 1735, communicated by Mr. Noble.

† On the information of Mr. Norris.

James,

repairs to different bishops of Winchester. The access to it is through an open court, where the dead in time of war were buried, called Castle-green, which at present lies in common. It was formerly enclosed with gates : that on the west was destroyed some years ago : but that on the east, called the Porter's Lodge, is now standing ; and, although great part is in ruins, yet the arches are very strong, and the grooves, in which the port-cullis was let down, are quite perfect. Part of the south wall has been lately taken down, to open a passage to the free-school.

In Castle-green, adjoining to the lodge, is a dwelling house, in the front of which is a stone, with a coat of arms, and a mitre over it. The
arms

James, in the county of Somerset, and in the parishes of St. Mary Ottery and Upottery, in the county of Devon, had then been, time out of mind, called Town Lands, and belonged to the town of Taunton, by virtue of feoffments made of those lands to certain persons called feoffees, who applied the profits to the uses of the borough only. Some neighbouring gentlemen objecting hereto were desirous of becoming feoffees ; but were refused by the townsmen, who resolved not to permit any others to be joined with them. After a full hearing it was decreed, Oct. 24, 1611, that the former feoffments should be called in, and that a new feoffment should be made before Christmas-day then next following*.

The new feoffment invested these lands in six gentlemen living out of the town, and in sixteen townsmen ; and empowered each class to fill up, by their own nomination, any vacancies in either occasioned by death. It directed that, *every year*, when the account of the issues and profits of the lands belonging to the town should be given in, the gentlemen feoffees should have fourteen days warning thereof, that they might be present at the taking of the account, if they would.

And as no particular uses, in many of the deeds thereof, did appear ; and the court did not allow that any of the profits of the said lands should be employed to maintain pastimes, feasting of gentlemen, or law-causes, neither for any other employment, to ease the townsmen's purses, nor to discharge them from contributions to the poor, nor to give relief to maimed soldiers, who are to be provided for by the statute ; but that all the issues and profits of the said lands should be employed to the use of the poor of the said town :

The decree therefore ordered, that *three parts of all the yearly issues, fines, and profits of the said lands should be wholly employed to the poor of the town and borough of Taunton, and that the same should be divided and distributed by the constables of the town, for the time being, they giving yearly an account thereof to the feoffees ; and that a fourth part of the issues, fines, and profits of the said lands should be employed to other good and charitable uses, as poor maid's marriages, lending it to poor tradesmen upon security for the payment thereof again, and such like, as the feoffees should think fit ; and no other, unless it be for the defence of the title of the said lands, or any other suit which might hereafter arise upon the neglect of this order and decree : and 30l. per annum is decreed to be paid for ever to the preacher, by the purchasers of the rectory†, in reference of a farm that had been lately purchased of the rectory of St. Mary*

* Locke's MS.

† From an account of the charities belonging to the poor of Taunton ; in an ancient book in the custody of Mr. Wm. Browne, one of the churchwardens of Taunton St. Mary Magdalen, marked on the back side, "Taunton St. Mary Magdalen, 1671. A Register Book." Communicated by Mr. Noble.

arms are a cross charged with five roses; and underneath, in old gothic characters, is this date, 1498. In passing to the principal gate, the path was over the mote, where the draw-bridge formerly stood. This mote was 25 feet wide, and 12 feet deep: it surrounded the castle on the south front, and east and west ends; a branch of the river Tone enclosing it on the north.

The remains of the ancient castle were deserving of notice. The old building, being 195 feet in front, had a circular tower at each end; of which one only is now remaining. The other, with the east end, has been long since destroyed, and a large house built in its room, that has been for many years a boarding school for young ladies. The west

Magdalen: and it was decreed, that the purchasers of the said rectory should make such assurance, for the perpetual continuance of the said 30l. per annum, as by learned counsel should be devised, and required by the preacher or any of his successors*.

The following is a state of the receipts and disbursements from the feoffee lands in the year 1614.

The particular rents of the lands belonging to the borough of Taunton, received and paid by Hugh Pitcher, this year 1614. George Hill, gent. and Thomas Chicke, constables.

Imprimis, The rent of the houses in High-street, per annum,	7	1	4
Item, The rent of the houses in Fore-street, per annum,	2	11	4
Item, The rent of the houses in East-street, per annum,	14	17	0
Item, The rent of the houses in North-street, per annum,	5	9	4
Item, The rent of the lands in Upottery and St. Mary Ottery, per annum,	11	12	0
Item, The rent of the houses in Nurton, per annum,	2	16	8
Item, The rent of the standings under the Guildhall, per annum,	9	0	0
Item, The rent of the house in Pole-street, per annum,	0	3	0
Item, The rent of the chest at the Guildhall stairs head, per annum,	0	2	0
Item, The rent of a garden at Pole's Bridge, per annum,	0	1	4
Item, Received of John Bennet what was a defective rent last year,	0	9	0
Item, Received by the constables of Edward Cox for the earnest of a house, late Adam Withers,	1	2	0
Total received,	£55	5	0
The amount of the distributions, including £2 : 00 : 0 to the bailiffs for gathering the rent,	53	10	7
Item, They crave allowance of defective rents, viz. of John Bennet,	1	3	0
Item, For the defective rent of Osmond Pitcher,	0	10	0
Item, For the defective rent of William Edwey,	1	15	0
Item, For the defective rent of Richard Chappel,	0	10	0
Item, For the defective rent of Robert Parker,	0	10	0
Total distributed and allowed,	57	18	
So remayneth due to the constables, which have paid out more than they have received †,	£2	13	7

* Locke's MS.

† Extracted from the roll, containing the accompte of George Hill and Thomas Chicke, constables. Communicated by Mr. Way.

Here

west end, or wing, is the shortest, being 66 feet in length, and was lately standing as it was originally built, allowing for the injuries it had suffered from the canon of its enemies, or rather from its greater enemy Time. The whole building had a flat roof, with parapet walls and embrasures for guns; but part of that roof, within the memory of man, has been taken down, and the present erected in its stead. On viewing the back part of it, there could be, lately, discerned some breaches made by canon in the old wall; which was judged from its appearance to be part of the castle built about the 11th century, if not the remains of that built by king Ina.

The principal part of the building, in its late ancient state, was the great hall, 119½ feet by 30½, and 20 feet 5 inches high; in which are annually held the Lent assizes, the county sessions, and the courts of the

Here may be the proper place to mention a distribution of 20 bushels of wheat baked into bread, by the discretion of the constables for the time being: the wheat for the purpose being bought by them, with part of the rents and profits of the town lands. This distribution has been, time out of mind, annually made at Christmas to the poor inhabitants of the town and borough*.

In 1614, Dec. 4, Mr. Thomas Trowbridge the elder, of Taunton, merchant-taylor, did grant and assign unto ten trustees two closes or pieces of ground, called Tunaways; the one consisting of five acres, and the other being one acre, lying in West-Monkton, for the residue of a term of 1000 years, commencing Sept. 28, 1613, upon trust, that out of the *rents and profits* of the said closes (then worth 6l. per annum clear to pasture) there *should be paid on St. Andrew's day yearly, unto the churchwardens and overseers of St. Mary Magdalen, 6l. whereof they were to pay on that day yearly, to the churchwardens and overseers of St. James, in or near Taunton, forty shillings, to be by them distributed amongst forty of the poorest, eldest, most honest, and impotent poor of that parish, by a shilling a piece; the same distribution to be paid on St. Thomas's day, before Christmas; and within a month after such distribution, the said officers of St. James to give a note of their names that received the said benevolence, unto the churchwardens and overseers of St. Mary Magdalen afore said.*

And that the residue, being *four pounds*, should be distributed, by the said *churchwardens and overseers of St. Mary Magdalen*, amongst *four score* of the like poor of that parish, by *one shilling a piece*, the same day; and to keep a note of the names of the said poor, and to deliver in such notes at Easter, before the constables of the borough of Taunton, calling in two or more of the trustees. And if the profits amounted to more than 6l. the residue to be in like manner distributed amongst the poor of Taunton St. Mary Magdalen, and to be accounted for as afore said. And if the profits should not amount to 6l. then a proportional abatement to be made on each parish, and the residue to be distributed as afore said. And when the number of trustees should come to four, then a new deed to be made to some person or persons, who should assign their interest back again to these four, and as many more as they should think expedient, the major part to be the sufficientest and honestest inhabitants of the town of Taunton; so that the term might be preserved to the uses afore said. And that *this gift* should go to the *increase of the relief of the poor*, and not to *ease any rate or taxation*. And the donor desired

* Account of charities, &c.

that

the bishop of Winchester. According to the date on the porch, under the coat of arms, it was built, or at least repaired, upwards of 200 years since. The arms are two coats impaled: first, two keys endorsed and a sword in saltire, being the arms of the bishop of Winchester: second, three bugle horns, the paternal coat of bishop Horn: the whole within a garter, with the motto, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*; and four cherubs at the corners. *Crux et vanitas*; i. e. The cross and vanity. 1577.

The grand jury room was, till within these two years, over the two strong arches of the inner gateway; on the inside of which is a coat of arms the same with that on the outside, except the inscription, which is nearly obliterated by time. We can however plainly discover, *Laus tibi xpi*, i. e. *Praise to thee, O Christ*; *℥. langtō wintō*. 1495.

The

that the poor should be assembled, on St. Thomas's day, at divine service, at their respective parish churches, except such as could not; and after the distribution made, the donor's name to be mentioned, and they put in mind to thank God for his mercy*.

In 1622, Sir George Farewell surrendered two closes of overland, in the tything of Hull, containing nine acres, to George Farewell, esq; his son, and his heirs, according to the custom and manor of Taunton-Dean, on condition, that he or his heirs, into whose possession they should come, should pay, out of the same, for ever, at Christmas, 48s. in the following proportions, viz. 24s. to the churchwardens and overseers of Hull-Bishops, 16s. to the same officers in the parish of St. Mary Magdalen, and 8s. to those of St. James, Taunton, to the use of the poor of each parish; with an obligation of 5s. forfeiture for non-payment within 15 days, to be recovered by entry of distress†.

In 1626, a workhouse, near Tone-bridge (now a coal-yard, occupied by Mr. Thomas Parsons) was purchased, by the constables, with the annual rents of the town lands‡.

In 1645, May 10, Mr. Robert Moggridge did, by his last will, bearing date that day, give, out of his lands, called Frethey, in Bishops-Hull, *five pounds ten shillings*, to be paid to the churchwardens of Taunton Magdalen, on the 1st of March annually; *five pounds* thereof to be by them given to the *honest and religious poor* of the parish, on the 30th of March, at their discretion; so as not to exceed 10s. nor give under 5s. to any one person. The other 10s. he assigned to the churchwardens, for their pains to distribute the same, and to give account thereof to the executors§.

In 1677, there was a liberal bequest to the poor, by the will of Robert Meredith, who died the 11th of October, that year; which was, afterwards, subjected to, and settled by, a decree of chancery, dated May 23, 4 James II. in the year 1688. This decree sets forth, that Robert Meredith, by will, dated in Sept. 1677, gave to the poor of the parish *four hundred pounds, to be laid out, by his executors, in lands, or a rent charge in fee simple*, and the conveyance to be in their names, and such others as they should appoint, in trust, that the rents and profits, or rent charge, should be taken by *the constables of the borough, and by them, between Michaelmas and St. Thomas's day, yearly, be laid out in cloth, and making it into coats and waistcoats for poor people inhabiting within the borough and parish, and distributed amongst*

* Account of charities, and Locke's MS.
and Locke's MS.

† Id.

‡ Locke's Register.

§ Account of charities,

The arms are, a cross, charged with five roses, on the top of which is a mitre. Above these are the arms of king Henry VII. supported on the dexter side with a greyhound, and on the sinister with a wivern; and this motto, *vive le roi Henri*, i. e. *Long live king Henry*. The arms and date on the left hand of these are the same with those on the porch of the hall, with the addition of the letters R. H. for Robert Horn. From these arms and dates we may infer, that Thomas Langton, bishop of Winchester, rebuilt or repaired the archway and grand jury room; as did bishop Horn the assize-hall.

Besides these apartments, there is in the castle a strong room called the Exchequer, in which the records of Taunton-Dean land are repositied; a large room which has formerly been used as an assembly-room,

*the poor there: and on St. Thomas's day, or such other day as the feoffees of the town lands of Taunton meet, the constables to give the feoffees an account, on their voluntary oath, of their receipts and disbursements, and to whom by name given: to which purpose a book is to be kept, and the account to be allowed or disallowed by the feoffees, and the executors might be present and join; and the names of the clothiers, and the quantities of the cloth of them bought, and the rates of the same, should be entered into the said account, or the same shall not be allowed; and the money otherwise laid out should be taken as not laid out. And till the money be laid out in a purchase, the produce thereof to be accounted for as aforesaid. It was also ordered and decreed, that the trust and charity, and all things declared in the will concerning the same and management thereof, shall stand good and be observed: and that the four hundred pounds, at Michaelmas next, shall be paid to the order of Sir William Portman, knight of the Bath and baronet, and the rest of the Taunton feoffees, or the major part of them, to be laid out in purchasing lands, called Gras-Croft, or Grassgrove, or other lands, annuity, or rent-charge: and the same to be settled and continued in the feoffees, or other trustees, as by the will and as hereby directed: and the interest, from St. Thomas's day last to the time of payment, to be paid to the constables, to be laid out as aforesaid: and the defendants, the executors, to be saved harmless, and to have their costs out of the 400l.**

1694. March 10. Sir Hugh Parker, by a will of this date, gave to the mayor, aldermen, and burgeses of Taunton, *five pounds* per annum, out of his tenement, called the Three Nuns, in Paternoster-row, London, to be employed as follows, viz. *Fifteen shillings* to the vicar of Taunton Magdalen, for preaching a sermon on the 1st of May; *two shillings and six-pence* to the clerk, and *two shillings and six-pence* to the sexton; and the other *four pounds* to be given in bread to the poor, after sermon, as the minister and churchwardens shall see fit. And, in case there be any default made, the said *five pounds* are wholly forfeited to the governors of Christ's Hospital, London, for the use of the blue coat children. And in case the said *five pounds*, clear in money, free from all deductions, remain unpaid for the space of twenty days after the 25th of March, the aforesaid mayor, &c. or the governors aforesaid, may enter and distrain on the premises with cost†.

About the middle of the 17th century, Mr. Clarke gave 100l. Mr. Warman, 50l. Mr. Grabham, 100l. Mr. George Hooper, two acres and half of meadow, at Pyrland; Mrs.

* Account of charities.

† Id. and Locke's MS.

room, as a theatre, as an armory for the militia, and for other purposes; a dungeon for prisoners; with rooms that have been occupied as tenements.

Tradition reports, says Mr. Locke, that there was a subterraneous passage from the inner court to the powder mills, at present the town mills; and, if so, doubtless, when the town was besieged, supplies were thrown in by that communication. This tradition is supported by a discovery, lately made, of an underground arched way, in a garden, adjoining to the castle, now in the possession of colonel Charles Roberts.

The castle was, for a number of years, held of the bishop of Winchester, by a surviving branch of the Lucas's, an ancient and respectable family in this town. In the year 1787, by the decease of the

Florence Stone, 20l. and Mrs. Jane King, 2l. per annum, for ever, to the poor. All these donations are mentioned in the parish book; but the two first are not accounted for at present*.

About the end of the last century, Mr. Philip Gadd, by his will, did appoint Mary his daughter, and her heirs, to pay, out of six acres of meadow, being the tything of Holway, on St. Thomas's day, *three pounds and ten shillings*, as follows, viz. *Two pounds ten shillings* to the churchwardens of Taunton Magdalen, and *twenty shillings* to the churchwardens of West-Monkton; to be distributed on St. Thomas's day, by *one shilling* to each poor person of Taunton, and *two shillings* to each poor person of West-Monkton†.

To the same date must be ascribed the donation of Mr. Samuel Reynolds, who gave, to the use of the poor of the town, half the profits of three acres of meadow, lying in Holway, to be distributed to the poor aforesaid, by the churchwardens, on Easter monday yearly‡.

Mrs. Margaret Cornish, in the same period, gave the profits of a meadow to the poor, for ever: but this gift has not been received for some years.

We must not close our account of the charities belonging to the town of Taunton, without mentioning an estate, given to the poor of the borough, called by the name of Stringlands. The description of it has been postponed to this place, though it appears to have had an early date, in hope of obtaining a more full and accurate information of its origin and design, than we are able, even after some weeks delay of the press, to procure. It has been, time immemorial, under the direction of trustees, elected from the protestant dissenters, and the application of it, except its limitation to the poor of the borough, is discretionary. It consists of various parcels of land and some dwellings belonging to the manor of Taunton Dean, and conveyed under six different surrenders. One of two acres of land of overland; a second of three acres and a third part of an acre of overland, called Meadland; a third of two cottages with the curtilages of bondland heretofore made or converted into six dwellings, with six gardens in the tything of Extra-Portam and now made into twelve dwellings; a fourth of an acre of land and meadow of overland, called Meadland; and a fifth of three acres and a third part of an acre of land and meadow of overland, called Meadland; and the sixth of five acres of land of overland in the Winmard. Of these parcels, all, but the fourth, are described as situated in the tything of Holway; and as being heretofore of Robert Taylor, except the sixth, in which before his name stands that of William Gill.

* Locke's Chron. Reg. p. 26.

† Account of charities, and Locke's MS.

‡ Locke's MS.

the last life on which it was held, it fell into the hands of the lord. This circumstance, and the ruinous state into which the assize-hall had been permitted to fall, threatened the removal of the assizes and sessions from Taunton, unless some speedy and vigorous measures were adopted. It was the subject of deliberation and of repeated meetings, to take proper measures for securing to the town, in future, the weight, importance, and advantages of being the seat of these public transactions: but no determination was formed, and this place was on the point of losing the assizes, when Sir Benjamin Hammet, one of the representatives of the borough, made a purchase of the castle, that the town might have the use of the assize-hall, and immediately employed architects and masons to put it into a state of sound and decent repair, to range a-new the courts, and to fit up a com-

They have been all invested in the same trustees, to the only use and behoof, and to and for the most benefit and advantage of the poor of the borough of Taunton, without any specification of uses. The third and fourth deeds of surrender are however differently expressed, and contain a clause which will afford the managers a clue to discover the original grantee and his intentions, if the surrenders, to which there is a reference, are in being; the premises described, under those numbers, are conveyed upon condition and to and for such uses and purposes as appear in and by a surrender of Thomas Pope the elder bearing date the 23d day of November, in the 33d year of the reign of queen Elizabeth, and in the year of our Lord 1591. The number of trustees, in whom this charity is invested, is seven*: and the estate produces 45l. per annum.

From the date, which many, and by far the most valuable of the preceding donations bear, it is obvious to remark, that, in general, they took place before poor-rates were established by act of parliament. The mode of relieving of the poor by taxation was adopted as a substitute for the loss, which they suffered by the alienation of the religious houses, from whence they had derived their principal support. The legislature, not trusting to the unconstrained exertions and natural force of the principle of benevolence, which the Creator has implanted in the human breast, and which revelation, with its powerful sanctions, calls into exercise, judged it proper to bind every estate to the payment of a proportional quota to the relief of the necessitous†. It may, however, be questioned, whether duties levied for this purpose have not proved, on the whole, more injurious than beneficial to the poor, by encouraging in their minds a dependence on legal claims to a support, very unfavourable to their own industry and œconomy—by giving occasion to expensive litigations about settlements—by placing indigent merit on the same footing with demerit—by investing overseers with a power, that generates an inhuman turn of mind—and by the burden they lay, checking the free natural disposition of the mind to acts of humanity. It is certain, that the records of almost all towns abound with proofs of

* From copies of surrenders, bearing date Dec. 14, 1747. Communicated by Mr. Noble.

† The first statute for the relief of the poor was made in the 5th of Elizabeth. But that did not specify any particular rate, but left every parishioner to give what he pleased, subjecting all who did not voluntarily give something to an assessment by the justices. In the 43d year of that queen's reign, another act invited overseers with a power to raise, by taxation, such sum or sums as they should think fit, for the employment and relief of the poor. Hist. Account of all Taxes, p. 254, &c.

commodious and elegant grand jury room. The expences of these works amounted to the sum of 417l. 9s. 4d. towards which sum Mr. Popham, the other representative, made a present of 105l. and some of the more generous and public-spirited inhabitants subscribed 94l. The balance, 218l. 9s. 4d. was paid by Sir Benjamin Hammet himself. He afterwards proceeded to fill up the mote, to lay out the ground round the castle, and to fit up an handsome suit of rooms; rearing again the decayed walls, converting the pile of ruins into a mansion, and restoring the castle in a style of magnificence and elegance.

The next place, devoted to the purposes of civil government, is the Town-Hall; where the borough sessions and other public meetings are held. This is a room, properly fitted up for the purpose, on the ground floor of a large and elegant building in the center of the town, called the Market-House; which we shall particularly notice in a subsequent chapter.

There was formerly, near Tone-bridge, a bridewell, belonging to the county of Somerset. As it was found too small, and had fallen

the various and liberal donations, which the benevolent, in former times, either by investments in their life, or by bequests in their wills, provided for want and age. But, since the full operation of the poor laws, such donations have, in a manner ceased: and we find in fact that no charities are so generously supported, or so properly conducted, as those which owe their maintenance to annual voluntary subscriptions. Such is the advantage of leaving the human mind, in its benevolent, and it may be added in its pious, feelings, to its freedom.

In this view of the matter, it may at least admit a doubt, whether the wisdom of the legislature would not have more effectually secured its benevolent ends by laws, which instead of enacting a tax from every one, had been framed to secure a faithful distribution of monies, granted by the dictates of a voluntary humanity. It is a ground of just complaint that in most places many charitable donations have been lost through fraud or negligence; and many more have been perverted, from their original design, to answer the purposes of party, or to gratify the appetite of luxury.

In a borough, constituted like that of Taunton, they are very liable to be employed to advance electioneering designs, rather than to relieve merit in distress. The annals of past times, it is to be feared, could furnish many shameful instances of a *clandestine* and *partial* distribution of charities, by which the voters of the lower class have been, eventually and *insiduously*, cut off from the use of their valuable franchise. The decision of Mr. Hobhouse, the returning officer's counsel, at the election of 1790, deserves to be recorded here; as founded in *wisdom and equity*, and as a bar in future against such *corrupt* abuses of the town charities. It was this—That charities *must be given in the manner prescribed by the donor*; and *any other giving* of money could not be considered as the distribution of the charity, the name of which it might bear; but would *subject the distributor to an action for the recovery of the money given under such pretences—and consequently, could not disfranchise those who had received it.*

into

A TABLE of the CHARITIES (exclusively N.

Donors.	Time of Grant.	Donation.	Distributors.
Mr. Simon Saunders.	1591.	100l. laid out in the Purchase of Ground, on which were erected three Ranks of Shambles; now sold to the Trustees of the Market-House.	Seven of the better Sort of the Inhabitants of the Borough.
Mr. Thomas Pope.	1591.	Stringlands, value 45l. per annum.	The Trustees.
Unknown.	Settled by Chancery, 1611.	Various Lands and Houses.	Three acc to t lent cha: The Conitables.
Mr. Thomas Trowbridge.	1614.	Two Clofes in West-Monkton, called Tunaways.	The The Churchwardens and Overseers of each Parish.
Sir George Farewell.	1622.	Two Clofes of Overland in the Tything of Hull.	Out of The Churchwardens and Par Overseers of each Parish.
The Constables.	1626.	A Workhouse near Tone Bridge, now a Coal Yard, occupied by Mr. Parsons.	The Constables.
Mr. Robert Moggridge.	1645.	5l. 10s. out of his Lands called Frethey, in Bishop's-Hull.	5l. to The Churchwardens of no St. Mary Magdalen.
Mr. George Hooper.	1650.	Two Acres and Half of Meadow, at Pyrland.	5s. 10s. Tr
Mr. Robert Meredith.	1677, by Will; and settled by Chancery 1688.	400l. to be laid out in Lands, or a Rent Charge in Fee Simple.	The in co: The Constables.
Sir Hugh Parker.	1694.	5l. per Annum out of his Tenement called the Three-Nuns, Paternoster-Row, London.	15s. The Churchwardens of da of St. Mary Magdalen.
Mr. Philip Gadd.	1694.	2l. 10s. yearly to the Parish of St. Mary Magdalen; and 10l. to the Parish of West-Monkton, out of six Acres of Meadow in the Tything of Holway.	To The Churchwardens of of St. Mary Magdalen. St th
Mr. Samuel Reynolds.	1694.	Half the Profits of three Acres of Meadow, lying in Holway.	The Churchwardens.
Mrs. Margaret Cornish.	1694.	The Profits of a Meadow.	

N. B. The following Sums were also given, of which the Author has obtained

into great decay, so that it was difficult to keep prisoners safe therein, to say nothing of its situation in the borough, the justices for the county, in the years 1753 and 1754, directed that it should be sold*, and a large gaol, erected in the parish of Wilton, on a scite, purchased of John Mallack, esq; for 300l. only a few yards without the borough. It was built by county rates, for those who are guilty of felonies, misdemeanors, or a breach of the peace: but not for debtors†. If the mayor should commit a person to this gaol, he cannot afterwards discharge him at the borough sessions: but he must remain in prison, till the next county sessions, or general gaol delivery.

The mayor's incompetency, in this instance, renders it necessary that there should be a prison for the borough. This, in 1787, was so out of repair, that, neither in point of decency and health, nor of security, was it fit for the reception of prisoners. By a vote of vestry it was determined to erect a new one in another spot, and the foundation of it was laid, and the building partly erected; when Sir Benjamin Hammet, as the situation of it would have interfered with his plan of opening a new street to the church, purchased a spot, near the scite of the former bridewell, and, at his own expence, erected a new one, in a plain but strong stile of building; and gave, for ever, the adjoining house, for the gaoler's residence.

Though there are not, in this town, structures separately erected for the purposes of entertainment and pleasure, the building, called the Market-House, is formed on a plan comprehensive of rooms for these uses, as well as of a neat town-hall for the administration of justice. For, on the ground-floor is a coffee-room; where gentlemen, for the annual subscription of a guinea, are accommodated with fire and attendance and supplied with the news-papers free from any other expence. In that room is a portrait of Mr. George Wiche‡, drawn by Thorn, at the expence of the gentlemen who frequent the room, in testimony of their respect to the probity of his character. On the first story, besides a commodious room for the card tables, there is a superb

* It was accordingly sold to Mr John Shute.

† Goddard's Extract from the Sessions-Rolls. p. 44, 45, 46.

‡ The steward of the proprietors.

assembly-

assembly-room, 50 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 24 feet high : this is furnished with two elegant and large glass chandeliers, the gift of the late colonel Coxe, when representative for the county. An upper room in this house is supplied with a billiard-table.

Behind an inn, now the Shakespeare, was fitted up and opened by Mr. Biggs, a comedian, a small but neat theatre, in 1786.

CHAP.

C H A P. III.

Its civil constitution.

IF it cannot, with strict propriety of language, be said, that the internal police of this town is subject to the authority and direction of two corporations; because this term implies a creation by an act of parliament, or by a royal charter: yet it may be asserted, that two bodies of civil officers, deriving their authority from different sources, have the care of the public peace and order: one consisting of the bishop of Winchester's officers, the other forming the corporation.

The first is of early date, and arose out of the connection of the town with the see of Winchester, the bishop of which, as we have seen, has been, through many centuries, its lord, and was invested with a civil authority as well as endowed with the lands of the manor. In his court there are annually chosen two constables, six tythingmen or petty constables, two portreeves, and two bailiffs.

The business of the bailiffs is to attend the bishop's courts: they possess also the power of creating a jury, according to their own discretion, which jury has the sole and independent power of choosing the constables and tythingmen, as well as the bailiffs and portreeves, for the ensuing year.

The province of the portreeves is to collect the bishop's rents, and they, formerly, enjoyed the privilege of granting leases of standings in the market. This was lost by the operation of the late market-house act, and as a compensation for it, they are, under the same act, entitled to an annual rent or yearly sum of eighteen pounds, clear of all taxes and deductions whatever; for the payment of which the rents and profits of the market are bound.

The constables, previously to the grant of the first charter, were the chief magistrates of the town, and were, generally, invested with the power of distributing the charities left to the poor: this last privilege

privilege they still retain in many instances derived from the appointment of the respective donors. As before the reign of James I. when copper was first coined by authority, it was stamped by any person who chose to do it*, the constables of Taunton, as did those of other towns, exercised this privilege, and they continued to do it long after the time of James I.† This coin was stamped with a Tau in a tun (a rebus expressive of the town's name) on one side, and the legend, A TAVNTON FARTHING; on the other side with an embattlement of a castle and the legend, BY THE CONSTABLES, with the date. It should seem that other persons availed themselves of the privilege of stamping copper, and it may be concluded from the legends on this money, that the date of the year, the name of the place, and the name of the person who stamped it, were necessary to a legal tender of it in payment‡.

Taunton, though a very antient and populous town§, was not incorporated by royal charter, till the reign of Charles I. 1627. This deed changed the constitution of the borough, and invested the civil power in the hands of a mayor, justice, aldermen, and burgessees.

This instance of royal favour was not, however, sufficient to attach them to the interests of the king in the civil wars. But, in this town a spirited stand was made against the unconstitutional measures of Charles I. and the cause of the parliament found here firm adherents and a most important support. This conduct drew on it, afterwards, the resentment, and awakened the jealousy of Charles II. who demolished its walls and took away its charter, by a quo warranto, in 1660. It is reported that he also seized and gave away an estate in Ireland, of which the corporation was then possessed||. A certificate found among the

* Priestley's Lectures on History, p. 134.

† I am inclined to think, that we had no municipal coins or tradesmen's tokens before the middle of the last century: at least, all that I have seen with dates were struck between 1650 and 1670. H. N.

‡ I have seen many without dates; some with only the initials of the tradesman's name; and some without either name, date, or place; in particular, one with this legend, "The Farthing of a Merchant of the Staple of England." H. N.

§ *Valdè antiqua et populosa* is the language of the charter.

|| The certificate runs thus: "Burgo de Taunton in co. Somerset. We, the mayor, aldermen, and burgessees of the town and corporation of Taunton, in the county of Somerset

the records of the parish, and written above an hundred years since, favours the supposition, that it had then such an estate. It continued without its charter for seventeen years, when the same king, at the suit and intercession of Dr. Peter Mew, then bishop of Bath and Wells, granted it a new charter. Without copying this deed verbatim, which would be tedious, we will lay before the reader a full and distinct, yet concise, view of the grants and powers communicated by it.

The charter enlarged the bounds of the borough beyond its ancient limits, and imparted to the body corporate a jurisdiction through not only the town, but the parishes of St. Mary Magdalen and Taunton St. James; and, in the most ample manner and form, co-extensive with their bounds.

It appointed that the corporation should consist of a mayor, two aldermen, fourteen capital burgeses, chosen from the more upright and discreet of the burgeses or freemen of the borough, and ten inferior burgeses: and that the aldermen, capital and inferior burgeses, should bear the name of the common council of the borough, whose province should be to aid the mayor in all causes and transactions relative to the borough. The capital burgeses are invested with their office during the term of their natural lives, unless they shall be removed for misconduct; as are also the inferior burgeses, unless they shall be removed for misconduct, or advanced to the office of capital burgeses.

Besides these constituent parts, it directed the election and nomination of a person, discreet and skilled in the laws of England, to hold, during royal pleasure, the office of recorder; who, by himself or deputy, should perform, within the precincts of the borough, all the services of that office. It assigned to them also the power of choosing

“ Somerset, do hereby certify whom it doth or may concern, that we do not know of or
 “ can find entered in any books or writings belonging to the corporation aforesaid, that
 “ either col. John Gorges, or his son, or any other person or persons, have, or ever had
 “ any grant, from the said corporation, of any of the lands lying in the burrows of Ruth,
 “ Conruth, in the county of West-Merth, in Ireland.” N. B. Thomas Gorges, as also
 John Gorges, were feoffees of the town lands in 1659: and Edward Gorges was member
 for Somerset 1688. Locke’s MS.

a man of discretion and probity, to act as a town-clerk, during the pleasure of the mayor, aldermen, and burgesſes; and who ſhould be allowed all the fees and profits of office belonging to the town-clerk, in any borough or city. As the charter nominated the firſt gentlemen, who filled, under it, the poſts of recorder and town-clerk; ſo it provides that no one, in future, elected to either of theſe poſts, ſhould be allowed to act in it, before they were ſworn and the nomination had been approved by the king under his ſign manual. The following gentlemen were the firſt members of the corporation.

Roger Gale, Mayor.

John Meredith and Thomas Legingham, Aldermen.

Robert Procter,
William Turner, ſenior,
Jaſper Chaplin,
Francis Hubbart,
Thomas Dare,
Philip Gad,
Stephen Tymewell,
Samuel Bindon,
Richard Snow,
Antipas Swinerton,
Thomas Hoſſam,

Capital Burgeſſes.

William Rawe,
Matthew Munday,
Bernard Smith,
William Turner, junior,
George Pollard,
William Baynard,
John Smith, ſenior,
Thomas Towill,
William Bidgood,
Roger Howe,
Richard Jeanes, Town-clerk.

Inferior Burgeſſes.

Thomas Syderfin, Recorder.

The firſt mayor, it was directed, ſhould be ſworn into his office by Peter, biſhop of Bath and Wells, Sir William Portman, bart. and Thomas Synderfin, eſq; or any one of them; who being thus inveſted with his office, had authority to ſwear in the aldermen, burgeſſes, recorder, town-clerk, ſerjeants at mace, and freemen. The charter aſſigned the corporation the name of “ The Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgeſſes of the Borough and Town of Taunton, in the County of Somerſet:” it granted to them the right of uſing a common ſeal, and of changing it for one they might judge better, from time to time: it alſo allowed them one or two ſervants, under the name of ſerjeants at mace, to execute warrants and precepts, to attend the mayor, to carry before him gilt or ſilver maces, with the king’s arms engraven on them.

them, and to perform other business within the precincts of the borough.

During the usurpation of Oliver Cromwell, the mace, carried before the mayor, had on it the arms of the protector, but under the new charter, the arms of Charles II. engraven on silver plates, were screwed over the other arms. In this state the maces exist to the present day.

The charter having thus formed, in the town of Taunton, a political corporate body, made explicit provision for its perpetuity, by laying down rules for filling up the vacancies, which, from time to time, might happen, in either of the constituent parts of it, by resignation, by removal of particular members on account of ill conduct, or by death. It enacts that vacancies amongst the superior burgesses shall be filled up by an election made out of the inferior; that vacancies amongst the latter class shall be filled up by an election from the more upright and discreet of the freemen of the borough. To the validity of such an election, it is necessary, that it be made by the major part of the surviving aldermen and burgesses, who are present; the mayor being always one. The same rule is laid down for filling up a future vacancy in the posts of recorder and town-clerk.

The mayor and aldermen, according to the limitation in the charter, going, of course, out of office at the expiration of a year from their being sworn in; the charter enacts, that the mayor and common council of the borough, or the major part (the mayor being always one) shall annually, on the monday next after the feast of St. Bartholomew, between the hours of eight and twelve in the forenoon, nominate and elect one of the aldermen, or of the capital burgesses, of the time being, to be mayor; and two of the capital burgesses to be aldermen; each for one whole year from the monday next after the ensuing feast of St. Michael the archangel; or until others shall be elected and sworn; and it enjoins, that they shall be sworn into their respective offices before the mayor and common council, or as many as shall be present, on the monday next after the feast of St. Michael. In case the mayor, or one or both of these aldermen, should, within the year withdraw or die; then it empowers, in the first instance, the aldermen and burgesses to assemble and to elect one of the alder-

men, or the capital burgesſes, to fill up the office of mayor for the remainder of the year, to be ſworn into it before the aldermen, capital and inferior burgesſes, or any ten or more of them : and in the ſecond inſtance, it empowers the mayor, the other alderman (if there be one), and the burgesſes, or the major part of them, to elect out of the capital burgesſes one or two aldermen (if both ſhould happen to fail) to ſupply thoſe offices for the reſidue of the year.

They who, without reaſonable cauſe, reſuſe to accept, and act in the poſts of mayor, aldermen, capital and inferior burgesſes, to which they ſhall, as before directed, be choſen, ſubject themſelves to a penalty or fine, applicable to the uſe and benefit of the corporation, as ſhall be deemed reaſonable by the mayor and common council, or the major part of them ; the mayor being always one.

The charter hath annexed to the offices, which it has thus created, certain powers and privileges. Some of theſe are peculiar and appropriate to particular parts of the corporation, and ſome common to the whole body.

The charter conſtitutes the mayor the clerk of the market, with authority to give the aſſize of bread, wine, ale, and every kind of victuals ; and to inſpect, examine, and adjust all weights and meaſures within the precincts of the borough : and to puniſh and correct every one who ſhall offend in theſe reſpects.

It conſtitutes the mayor, recorder, and aldermen, for the time being, and the firſt for one year after the expiration of his mayoralty, juſtices of the peace within the borough and through the pariſhes, with as ample powers as are poſſeſſed by any juſtice of the county : to hold ſeſſions within the borough, concerning all matters and offences done within the borough and pariſhes, except as to ſuch treaſons, felonies, and crimes, as affect life and limb ; againſt which they ſhall not proceed without ſpecial licence. And it authoriſes them and the other juſtices, or any two or more of them (the mayor or recorder to be always one), by their warrant, under their hands and ſeals, to commit any apprehended within the borough and liberties, under the charge or ſuſpicion of treaſon, murder, felony, homicide, and robbery, to the county gaol, to remain in cuſtody, for trial before the juſtices of oyer and terminer, or the juſtices appointed for gaol delivery.

It

It grants the corporation a right to meet and assemble or hold courts in any place within the borough, by the public summons of the mayor: and to them or the major part of them so assembled (the mayor being always one) it gives authority to make such laws and statutes as to the sound judgment and discretion of them, or the major part of them (the mayor being always one), shall appear useful, salutary, just, and necessary for the direction and government of the corporation, and of all the inhabitants of the borough, and the two aforesaid parishes, with a power to fix fines and penalties for the enforcement of such regulations and bye-laws as to the mayor, aldermen, and burgeses, or to the major part of them, assembled on the occasion, shall appear reasonable and fit, with a power of receiving such fines: provided that the laws and penalties be not repugnant to the laws of the realm. It invests the mayor and common council, or the major part of them (the mayor being always one) with a power of removing burgeses for misbehaviour in their office.

It further invests the mayor, aldermen, and burgeses, and their officers, with full power to examine and inspect any frauds or deceptions practised with respect to the goods and manufactures, called serges, broad-cloths, and kerseys, exposed to sale within the limits of the borough; and to seal all that shall be found good and sufficient, according to the statute in such cases provided.

To give weight to their justiciary proceedings, the charter further directs that the mayor, aldermen, and burgeses shall have a prison within the precincts of the borough, for the safe custody of felons and other malefactors and disturbers of the public peace: the keeper of which gaol is to be the mayor, for the time being, or a sufficient deputy, for whom he shall be responsible.

To prevent an abuse of the powers, with which the charter invests the corporation, it gives the judge of the assize authority to remove from his office any mayor, alderman, or burgeses, who shall be convicted of acting contrary to the laws and statutes of the realm.

The privileges and benefits which the charter grants to the corporation are an exemption to the mayor, aldermen, burgeses, and inhabitants of the town, from the payment of any tolls to the king
on

on goods, chattels, and merchandise ; all fines and penalties, levied on any person, for any cause, at the borough sessions ; an authority to hold and possess any manors, messuages, lands, tenements, rectories, tithes, reversions, and other hereditaments whatever, whether fee or leasehold, provided that the neat yearly profits and issues do not exceed 300*l.* per annum ; and all kinds of liberties, privileges, and franchises.

Charters were originally meant as well to encourage trade, as to strengthen the power of the crown ; but according to the illiberal policy of former times, by exclusive privileges and monopolies, they discountenanced the free exertions of industry and genius. Thus the charter, before us, prohibits any stranger or foreigner, or any one besides freemen of the borough, to sell, or expose to sale, any goods or merchandise, within the borough or parishes, except by wholesale or necessary articles of food, unless at the fairs or markets : or to keep shop or carry on any trade or manual occupation within the liberties or precincts of the borough, without the special licence of the mayor and common council, or the major part of them (the mayor being always one), written under their seal, on the pain of royal displeasure, or of such other penalties and forfeitures, as by the laws and statutes of the realm may be inflicted on such offenders.

The charter ratifies and confirms the enjoyment of all former privileges and jurisdictions granted by any former royal patent or charter, or by any lord of the manor : and it confirms to the bishop of Winchester, and his successors, all the privileges, pre-eminences, and emoluments enjoyed by any of his predecessors.

Further it is to be pleaded in all courts and to be construed in the most liberal manner for the benefit of the corporation.

Minute as is the survey we have taken of the tenor and articles of this royal charter, there is one distinguishing clause, we have not yet noticed. Such deeds, generally, provide that no justices, besides those of the body corporate, shall intermeddle in their proceedings and jurisdiction*. But there is, in the grant before us, a marked distinction, in this respect, from all other charters : for it appoints that there always shall be six justices of the county, nominated and

* Shephard on Corporations, p. 60.

appointed,

appointed, from time to time, by the chancellor or the keeper of the great seal, who shall be justices within the borough and its precincts, to act as the other justices of the borough. But that no one of them shall be compelled to accept the mayoralty or any other office in the borough; or be subject to any punishments or penalties imposed by the mayor, aldermen, and burgessees. This appointment was, evidently, intended as a check upon the magistrates incorporated by the new charter; and was strongly expressive of the king's disgust and suspicions.

The last commission, appointing such adjunct justices, bears date the 4th of March, 1767. The former commission had expired several years before, at the death of Sir William Pynsent, the survivor, under a former nomination. On an application made by some of the inhabitants of the borough, a new appointment constituted Henry William Portman, Coplestone Warre Bampfylde, John Collins, William Hawker, John Halliday, esqrs. and Francis Warre, clerk, "Justices to keep the peace, from time to time, within the borough and town of Taunton and Taunton St. James, and the liberties and precincts of the same, according to the tenor, form, and effect of certain letters patent, granted to the said borough and town, bearing date the 13th day of September, in the 29th year of the reign of Charles II. late king of England." It also constituted that these gentlemen "should have full power and authority, together with the mayor and other justices of the said borough and town, and liberties and precincts of the same, to perform, do, and execute *all and singular the things within the said borough and town, and liberties and precincts of the same,* which to the office of a justice of the peace belong, *in as ample manner and form as the said mayor of the aforesaid borough and town, and the other justices of the same borough and town, or any one of them,* within the aforesaid borough and town, or the liberties and precincts of the same, may or ought to do, by virtue of the said letters patent, or any other letters patent in that behalf granted, or to be granted, any thing in the said letters patent contained or specified to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding." It also commanded the mayor, and other justices of the borough and town,

"for

“ for the time being, to admit into their society the abovenamed
 “ justices, as well to the *sessions* of the peace, to be held within the
 “ borough and town, as to *do all other things* which belong or appertain
 “ to the office of justice of the peace, within the borough and town
 “ aforesaid, and the liberties and precincts of the same : and that all
 “ and singular the serjeants at mace, the constables, sub-bailiffs, keepers
 “ of prisons and gaols, and all other officers and ministers, whom it
 “ doth or may concern, in the execution of the premises, should be,
 “ from time to time, attendant upon and obedient to the said justices.”
 It further commanded those six justices “ to apply themselves to all
 “ and singular the premises to be done and executed in form aforesaid,
 “ and to do and execute the same with effect*.”

Though Taunton is a town of high antiquity, and has been, through many ages, a very flourishing place, and of great importance in the county ; and though the second charter, notwithstanding the ungracious aspect of the preceding clause, gave the corporation the power of holding estates ; yet it has neither land, nor houses, nor joint stock of money.

The times afford no probable prospect of such a corporation, as this, rising in the political scale by the enlargement of its power under a new charter, or by the restoration of any estates formerly belonging to it, or by future donations of property under deeds of gift or wills. Corporate bodies have not, in general, proved themselves the most exact and faithful trustees. The reasons of their first constitution, the grounds which recommended them to royal patronage or to the aids of private generosity, have long since ceased. They arose into existence when the power of the barons formed a great opposition to that of the crown, and almost overwhelmed the influence of the people. To encourage trade, and to be a check on the barons, were communities incorporated under royal charter, and being incorporated were strengthened by liberal endowments, and the influence derived from charitable trusts. The advance of commerce, the

* From a copy of the commission in the hands of Mr. John Norman, who favoured the author with an opportunity to inspect and transcribe it.

opulence it has diffused over the country, and the power politically granted by Henry VII. to the barons to alienate their estates, have long since superseded the necessity of such an intermediate body between them and the crown. The evils arising from a body of men being separated from the community, united by an independent interest or divided by mutual jealousies, the abuse of power connected with such constitutions, and the advantages which a corrupt minister may derive from their influence, have been, in many instances, too visible to escape the observations of the most careless : and are effects of too disagreeable and pernicious a nature to render the further extension or additional emoluments of such constitutions an object to be desired by the people at large. As to order and decorum in a town, that they may be effectually preserved without such authority, by the vigilance of a civil officer and the spirit of the inhabitants, the large and populous towns of Birmingham and Manchester afford a conspicuous proof. These causes certainly contribute, in the present age, very much to take from the importance and diminish the weight and respectability of corporations ; and might, especially in connexion with the large estates some of them possess, and which a time of political necessity would tempt a daring minister to seize, hold out sufficient inducements for their dissolution. But it is a security to these communities, that they can be legally dissolved only by parliament*. The conduct of Charles II. therefore in depriving Taunton of its charter, was an unjustifiable act, which ought to have met with a spirited constitutional opposition, had the times given room for it.

However the corporation of Taunton has suffered by the outrages of prerogative, the town has preserved a most valuable privilege, that of sending members to parliament. Such it ought to be estimated, for every individual, who has a voice in the election of representatives, is in fact himself a legislator ; and consigns his power, by deputation, to those whom he chooses to act for him in the general assembly of the nation. He has the best security, that his property cannot fall a sacrifice to the violence of power ; because his deputies cannot take his money by a tax without subjecting their own to the same tax ;

* Shepherd on Corporations, p. 129.

and in a greater proportion, as their property is more extensive : and besides this, at the conclusion of every parliament they become amenable to their constituents. The privilege of which we speak is held in high estimation by foreigners. " The country towns in " England," saith one, " have an importance which such places are " destitute of elsewhere : this they owe to the right of sending mem- " bers to parliament every seven years*."

Taunton, as far as the matter can be traced, was a borough-town as early as the common people became privileged with a representation†. It sends two members to parliament. The powers of election here are subject to the following restrictions. This right is limited to the borough, the bounds of which, as to the rights of election, so far from co-extending with those of the town, do not coincide even with those of the parish of St. Mary Magdalen, which lies within the town. The right is further confined to parishioners, not being stated paupers, nor receiving any share of the alms distributed from the funds of the respective charities left to the town. These restrictions excepted, the right of voting is the privilege of all the inhabitants, who dress their own victuals in their own room, or keep a table to themselves. Hence they are generally called Pot-walloners‡.

The constitution of this borough, as far as its operation extends, appears to be founded on just principles. For every one, who is liable to be called upon to bear arms in defence of the state, and to contribute his quota towards the burdens of government, and who has personal rights to guard (those valuable ones in particular of conscience and liberty), is properly invested with a power to protect himself against the encroachments of authority and the exactions of

* Grosley's Observations on England, vol. II. p. 275.

† The first great council, in the nature of a parliament, was held by king Henry I. at Salisbury : when the first money bill, that ever passed into a law, laid a tax of three shillings on every hide of land, in England, in order to raise a fortune for his daughter Maud, on her marriage with Henry V. emperor of Germany. Locke's MS.

‡ Pot-walloner, Pot-waller, or Pot-walloper signifies one that boils his own pot ; but not in the street, as has been wantonly reported. Each of these terms is derived from *wealan*, Saxon, to boil : but Pot-waller seems to be most proper. It is observable that wall and wallop are provincial expressions of the like import at this day. Locke's MS.

tyranny.

tyranny. Such popular constitutions of boroughs may have their inconveniences and evils. But the bribe cannot rise so high, nor the spirit of venality become so abandoned, as where the right of choosing members of parliament lies in fewer hands. The poorest inhabitant of a borough so constituted feels his importance in the political scale, and is able to hold up his head against the insolence of wealth and rank. Many of the lower rank are known, on the trying occasion of a contested election, to act with a firmness and a regard to their word, when once pledged, which do them honour. The disposition to wish for and favour a contest is not peculiar to popular boroughs : and the evils, of which a contest is ever productive, are not to be imputed to a number of persons who have not, in themselves, either weight, or union, or skill in management, to effect one ; but to those of higher station, whose resentment is fed, or whose love of power is gratified, or whose interest is advanced by it. The peculiar mischief of a contested election, in such a town as Taunton, arises from the habits of idleness and debauchery, into which it draws a large proportion of the people, to the hindrance of trade as well as the destruction of sobriety. But these mischiefs, instead of being considered as arising from a fault in the constitution of the borough, instruct and warn those who have a lead in the town, whose fortune should place them above little mercenary views, and whose education should teach them the excellence of the English constitution, and the duty of every man's endeavouring to preserve, in every part, its purity and energy : the mischiefs of which a contested election is productive, should instruct and warn such, not to encourage or foment them, but on the truest *patriotic principles* : when the essential interests of the nation are at stake, or the support of a wise, enlightened, virtuous, and independent candidate is depending.

The author must be permitted to add, that he shall think this history will answer a most important end, if he could by it convey into the minds of the rising generation, in the town of Taunton, a deep and full conviction, that a right to vote, in the election of the national representatives, is a *trust of the greatest value*, and of the most serious influence on the welfare of his country : a *trust* for the public

good, not to be disposed of merely to serve or oblige those who wish to advance themselves in the community, as a matter of favour to them ; but to be employed in the support of men of ability, or at least of honest minds and disinterested virtue, though they possess not shining talents : in support of those, who, from their known principles and character, it may be hoped, will approve themselves faithful guardians of the national welfare ; the consistent and firm friends of civil and religious liberty : in a word, a *trust* to be used not merely to meet the wishes of a candidate, but to serve *our country*.

It cannot be foreseen, what consequences may be connected with the return of *one single gentleman* to parliament ; or with the application of *one single vote* in a borough. So totally improper, so *exceedingly mischievous* is the language often held out ; “ What signifies one vote ? ” Every man should feel it to be of the *greatest importance to himself*, and to the discharge of his *own duty*, to act upon the principles of virtue and rectitude. In the senate, on *one vote* may depend the salvation of the kingdom. *One vote decided the Hanover succession**.

The nature and importance of these reflections, though they interrupt the narrative, must be pleaded in excuse of their prolixity. We will proceed with the historical view of the representation of this town, by exhibiting a list of the members from the restoration to

* Another striking example of the importance of a single vote is furnished by Mr. Whiston. “ In the year 1685 there was so extraordinary a crisis of the protestant religion, as well deserves to be mentioned here ; inasmuch that, bishop Burnet partly implies, but Mr. Arthur Onslow more distinctly informs me, it once depended on a *single vote* in the house of commons, whether king James should be permitted to employ popish officers in his army or not : which point had he gained, there was visibly an end of the public establishment of the protestant religion in this kingdom. It came, as I said, to a single vote ; and a courtier, who was to watch every voter where the member had any employment under the king, observed one that had a regiment going to vote against the court : and seeing him, put him warmly in mind of his regiment. He made answer ; “ My brother “ died last night, and has left me 700l. a year ; ” which *single vote* gained a majority, and saved the protestant religion at this time. If I might use an heathen expression in a case belonging to christianity, I would say, *Non hoc sine numine divinum*. ” Whiston’s Memoirs, 2d edit. p. 19.

To these instances it may be added, that towards the close of the late American war, several very important *constitutional* motions, in the house of commons, were negatived and lost by a *single vote*.

the year 1790, and subjoining to it some account of the more remarkable elections.

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1660. Thomas Gorges, esq; | William Wyndham, esq; |
| 1661. Sir William Portman, bart. and | The fame, on Dec. 11, this |
| knight of the Bath, of Or- | year, created a baronet. |
| chard-Portman. | |
| 1678. The fame. | John Trenchard, esq; of Dor- |
| | setshire. |
| 1681. Edmund Prideaux, esq; of Ford | The fame. |
| Abbey, Devon. | |
| 1685. Sir William Portman. | John Sanford, esq; of Nine- |
| | head. |
| 1688. The fame. | The fame. |
| 1690. John Speke, esq; of Dillington*. | Edward Clarke, esq; of Chip- |
| | ley, the friend of Mr. Locke. |
| 1695. The fame. | The fame. |
| 1698. Henry Seymour Portman, esq; | The fame. |
| of Orchard-Portman. | |
| 1701. Sir Francis Warre, bart. of | The fame. |
| Hestercombe†. | |
| 1702. The fame. | The fame. |
| 1705. The fame. | The fame. |
| 1708. The fame. | The fame. |

* This gentleman was descended, in the twenty-third degree, from Richard Speke, the first of the name who settled in Somersetshire : who was descended from the famous Walter l'Espece, of Yorkshire, founder of the three large abbies of Kirkham, Rievaulx, and Warden. John Speke, esq; one of his ancestors, was honoured with a letter from Edward V. dated June 5, 1483, requiring his attendance at the tower of London, to assist at his coronation, and to receive the order of knighthood. Another of that name was appointed one of the commissioners for administering the oaths in 1534. There was also a George Speke, esq; who was high sheriff of the county of Somerset in 1592 : and a Sir Hugh Speke, who was created a baronet by Charles II. Locke's Western Rebellion, p. 6.

† This gentleman was first returned March 17, 1700, in the room of Henry Portman, esq; who being elected both for Taunton and Wells, took his seat for the last place. The vacancy for Taunton brought on a contest between Sir Francis Warre, bart. and Mr. Thomas Baker, a merchant, of Taunton : the mayor returned the former, and Mr. Baker petitioned ; but the petition was not pursued*.

* A son of this Mr. Baker was a dissenting minister ; who left two daughters, one of whom, the widow of Rev. Dr. Amory, is now living.

1710. The same. Henry Portman, esq;
 1713. The same. The same.
 1714. James Smith, esq; of Canons- Sir William Pynsent, bart. of
 Leigh. Burton.
 1722. The same. John Trenchard, esq;
 1725. Abraham Elton, esq; of Bristol, in the room of John Trenchard,
 esq; deceased.
 1727. George Speke, esq; of Dilling- Francis Fane, esq; of Bristol.
 ton.
 1734. Henry W. Berkley Portman, The same.
 esq; of Orchard-Portman.
 1741. Sir John Chapman, of London. John Buck, esq; a merchant at
 Biddeford.
 1745. Percy Wyndham O'Brien, esq; (afterwards earl of Thomond) in
 the room of John Buck, esq; deceased.
 1747. Robert Webb, esq; barrister at Sir Charles Wyndham, bart, of
 law, a native of Montserrat, Orchard-Wyndham.
 in the West-Indies ; but de-
 scended from Mr. Robert
 Webb, a very respectable
 manufacturer in Taunton.
 1749. William Rowley, esq; rear-admiral of England, in the room of
 Sir Charles Wyndham, who was promoted to a peerage, on
 the death of his uncle, the duke of Somerset.
 1754. Lord Carpenter, of Homme, John Halliday, esq; of Yard,
 near Weobly, Herefordshire. Taunton.
 1754. Dec. 24. Robert Maxwell, esq; (afterwards earl of Farnham)
 was elected in the room of John Halliday, esq; deceased.
 1761. Lord Carpenter. Lord Farnham.
 1762. Lawrence Sullivan, esq; an East-India director, in the room of
 lord Carpenter (afterwards earl of Tyrconnel), deceased.
 1768. Alexander Popham, esq; bar- Nathaniel Webb, esq; brother
 rister at law. of Robert Webb, esq; then
 deceased.
 1774. The same. John Halliday, esq; eldest son of
 the late John Halliday, esq;
 1780.

1780. John Roberts, esq; a major- The same.
general and a native.

1782. Benjamin Hammet, esq; a native of the town, in the room of
general Roberts, deceased.

1784. Alexander Popham, esq; Benjamin Hammet, esq; who
received the honour of
knighthood in 1787.

1790. The same. The same.

These returns of representatives for the town of Taunton were not procured without frequent and violent contests. Great part of the period, through which the preceding list runs, was of the most serious nature, and marked with violent, national altercations. Previously to the revolution, Charles II. and James II. made every effort to extend and establish that prerogative*, in the abuse of which their royal father had lost his life. After the settlement of the prince of Orange on the throne, and the accession of the Hanover family, very vigorous struggles were made, by the friends of the Stuart race, to bring in again the supposed representative of that house. These oppositions of course extended themselves to the boroughs; and the seasons of election were the opportunities which each side warmly endeavoured to improve, to the advancement of their own views and interests, by setting up and supporting, as candidates, gentlemen of very different sentiments and attachments. With these political and public objects, personal prejudices, partialities, and interests are often blended, to

* Of the dispositions and views of Charles II. the memorial of his ambassador to the king of Poland, in 1667, furnishes a striking and convincing proof. The memorial, expressing Charles' resolutions to assist the king of Poland in establishing his title to the crown, adds, "The king, my master, being truly sensible of the great misfortune of those princes, whose power must be bounded and reason regulated by the fantastick humours of their subjects. Till princes can be freed from those inconveniences, the king, my master, sees no possible prospect of establishing the Roman-catholic religion." The character, on account of his avowed aims and notorious practices, given of this prince, was, "That he was an irreconcilable enemy of the protestant-religion, a parliament, and a virtuous woman." A known declaration of the duke of York, afterwards James II. as strongly marked his despotic principles and wishes: for he was frequently heard to say; "He had rather reign one month as the king of France, than twenty years as his brother, the king of England did." The Secret History of the Reigns of King Charles II. and King James II. printed in the year 1690, p. 134, 151, and 159.

foment contests and heighten animosities. Some of the more interesting of these oppositions and circumstances of importance connected with the returns at other times, it may be expected, should undergo a review in an history of the town.

The gentlemen, whose names stand at the head of our list, owed their seats in parliament to the management and influence of the crown. The long sitting of the pensionary parliament of 1661, while it tended to rivet on the people the chains of slavery, precluded the efforts of a contested election. The vigorous and distinguishing part taken in the election of 1681, by Mr. John Hucker, a fergemaker, eventually drew on him the severest effects of royal indignation. He was a captain of foot in the duke of Monmouth's service, and was taken prisoner in the day of battle. Great intercession was made for his life: but his having been a principal person in the management of elections was a bar to his pardon. In a letter to a friend, a little before his execution, he left this manly and proper vindication of himself in this respect. "As to elections of members of parliament, I judge it my birthright, and therefore was industrious in it: but I hope never did (I am sure never intended) troublesomeness to any in it, but especially to my superiors. I had ever a venerable and due esteem of magistrates, as the ministers of God, and they administering an ordinance of God*."

The illegal and cruel proceedings of judge Jeffries and of colonel Kirk naturally filled the country with terror, and made it easy for the court to carry two gentlemen, favourable to their views. But in 1690, being the first parliament of king William, two gentlemen were elected, attached to the principles of the revolution: viz. Mr. Clarke and Mr. Speke. This Mr. Speke had escaped from the kingdom, and spent his time in travel, till the revolution; a proclamation having been issued against him, in the proceedings against the adherents to the duke of Monmouth. His family suffered heavily for that cause*.

Mr.

* Western Martyrology, 5th edit. p. 215. and Locke's Western Rebellion, p. 2.

† A proclamation was also issued against George Speke, esq; the father of this gentleman, who paid 10000l. to be free from further persecution. Charles Speke, esq; of London, the brother

Mr. Clarke was the gentleman at whose desire the great Mr. Locke wrote, and to whom he dedicated, his excellent treatise on education. The dedication concludes with a testimony to the character of Mr. Clarke, which will reflect lasting honour on his memory. "My affection to you," says Mr. Locke, speaking of his tract, "gave the first rise to it, and I am pleased that I can leave to posterity this mark of the friendship has been betwixt us. For I know no greater pleasure in this life, nor a better remembrance to be left behind one, than a long continued friendship with an *honest, useful, and worthy man, and lover of his country.* 7th March, 1692." It doth credit to the town of Taunton, that such a man was its representative in seven parliaments: and it is a presumption, that, during that period, a great number of the electors paid a just regard to the moral and political conduct of their member, and were influenced by truly patriotic principles. He did not, indeed, regain his seat without opposition. In the election of 1695, there was a third candidate, Mr. Portman: and in 1698 four gentlemen offered themselves to represent the borough; the two who had been sitting members in the preceding parliament, and Henry Seymour Portman, esq; and Francis Hobart, esq;

brother of the member, suffered death at Ilminster. He happened to be in the town when the duke of Monmouth passed through it; and it is said, that he did no more than make obeisance to him; which compliment the duke returned with shaking him by the hand: and this, at his trial, was construed into an approbation of the rebellion. His family was obnoxious to the then ruling powers, for their opposition to popery. He himself was proved to be a protestant dissenter. And great advantages were to be derived from the sale of a considerable place in the king's bench, which he had purchased, and which by his fall would be forfeited. These considerations had so much weight, that no intercessions for his life could prevail. When the major of the first regiment of guards asked judge Jeffries whether any favour would be shewn him; he replied, "No: his family owes a life: he shall die for his brother, who is guilty of being in the action; but has escaped." He was greatly esteemed and beloved; and his execution was accompanied with the tears and lamentations of the inhabitants of Ilminster and the spectators. He met his death, in the bloom of life, with pious fortitude and submission; praying very fervently for near an hour and singing a psalm, previously to the tying of the fatal knot. He often declared, "That the pains of the death before him were nothing to his deserts from God Almighty: but as for what I am accused of and sentenced for," he added, "I hope you will believe I am not so guilty as my judge and accusers have endeavoured to make me. If it had pleased God, I should have been willing to have lived some time longer; but God's time being come, I am willing, I will be contented to drink this bitter cup off."—*Western Martyrology*, 5th edit. p. 187. and *Locke's Western Rebellion*, p. 6. note.

The dissolution of parliament, by the death of queen Anne, and the accession of George I. to the throne, brought on, at Taunton, and in many places, a violent contest, between the parties into which the kingdom was then divided. The members returned by the mayor, as duly elected for this borough, were Sir Francis Warre, bart. and Henry Portman, esq; The number of votes for the former gentleman was stated to be 637, and for the latter 635. The other candidates were William Pynsent and James Smith, esqrs. and the votes for each of them were reckoned at 381.

William Pynsent and James Smith, esqrs. and their friends, were greatly dissatisfied with the conduct of the mayor, and petitioned against his return. The petitions of the candidates, and of the inhabitants attached to their interest, severally set forth, in general, the partiality of the returning-officer, in refusing the votes of several persons who had a right to vote, and offered the same for the petitioners, and in admitting others to vote for Sir Francis Warre and Mr. Portman, who had no right so to do: and that other corrupt, undue, and unwarrantable practices were made use of by Sir Francis Warre and Mr. Portman, and their agents, before, at, and since the election, to the great wrong and injury of the petitioners.

The petition of the inhabitants particularly represented, that, by the illegal conduct of the mayor, the poll of the borough, which usually in time past had consisted of about 600, now amounted to above 1000: and that he refused to grant a scrutiny on the poll, though demanded by Mr. Pynsent and Mr. Smith, and frequently desired by several of the petitioners.

The counsel's brief formed on these petitions proceeded on the ancient constitution of the borough, particularised the illegal practices complained of, and classed, as well as ascertained, the number of votes, which the petitioners proposed to disqualify.

With regard to the constitution of the borough it was pleaded, that the borough of Taunton was a borough by prescription, consisting of six tythings, viz. East-street, Fore-street, North-street, High-street, Poles-street and Shuttern; containing about 300 distinct houses and no more: and had sent two members to parliament for time immemorial:

morial : and that the portreeves, before the town was incorporated by king Charles I. were the returning-officers.

That since that charter, and the charter of king Charles II. (neither of which charters meddle with the right of election) the mayors had returned the precept ; which power of returning the petitioners did not controvert : and that by those charters the corporation was extended through the two whole parishes of Taunton St. Mary Magdalen and Taunton St. James, which are large parishes ; so that the corporation is very much larger than the borough.

That the right of election is in the inhabitants, potwallers, of the said borough, not receiving alms nor living in alms-houses, whether settled parishioners or not : or whether they had certificates from other parishes or not : and the right of election had always stood upon this footing, till the year 1700 : when the inhabitants, under discharges or certificates, were first denied to vote, on one side : while, on the other side, inhabitants, under the same predicament, were received to vote, their discharges being suppressed or refused to be produced*.

The particular allegations of unwarrantable practices, set forth in the petition, were,

1. That now, and at former elections, many foreigners had been encouraged to come into the borough a short time before the election, leaving their families and goods in other parishes : that ten or twenty, of this description, had been in an house, where there had not been above two or three chimnies, and had polled, and as soon as the elections were over went away again.

2. That previously to the election a number of poor men had been struck out of the parish-pay-roll, and maintained, by the bye, till the election was over, and then entered in the pay-roll again.

3. That licences had been taken away from inn-keepers and ale-house-keepers on account of their votes : that 4l. a piece had been paid for them again ; and some were not yet restored to them.

4. That some had been risen and others abated in their rates on account of their votes.

* This was at a contest between Sir Francis Warre and Mr. Baker ; on Mr. Portman, who had been chosen both for Taunton and Wells, choosing to stand for the latter place.

5. That some had been threatened to be starved, in case their necessities should oblige them to apply for parish aid; and others had been denied relief on casual wants.

6. That several, after the election, had been rewarded for their votes by parish pay.

7. That out of the same house, one vote had been refused, on the plea that the house was not in the borough; and yet another admitted.

8. That many had been made freemen, gratis, in order to multiply votes.

9. That, for the same purpose, strangers had been taken in and made parishioners, and the parish damnified thereby.

10. That poor men had been rated to increase the number of scot and lot men on one side and others on the other side had been struck out.

11. That, at the time of the election, the mayor would not give the agents of the petitioners time to make objections.

The petition further alledged, that though above 1000 were admitted to poll, at this election, yet, on a narrow scrutiny made into the whole parish, by the supervisors of the highways, there were not 1000 housekeepers in the whole parish; nor full 700 within the borough.

The petitioners proposed to disqualify voters for the gentlemen returned as members,

1. Of Minors and apprentices,	36
2. Alms-men, ———	30
3. Out-livers, ———	198
4. Not housekeepers, ———	107
5. Charity-men, ———	129
Total, ———	500*

The house received the preceding petitions, and proceeded to the hearing of the merits of the election for the borough of Taunton, on Thursday, July 28, 1715. The petitions were read, and counsel on both sides were heard, and witnesses were examined, concerning the right of election. After the counsel withdrew,

It was resolved, That the right of election of burgessees, to serve in parliament for the borough of Taunton, in the county of Somerset,

* From the petitions and the counsel's brief, communicated by Mr. Norris.

is in the *inhabitants* within the said borough, being *pot-wallers*, and not receiving *alms* or *charity**.

The further hearing of the merits of the election was then adjourned until the Saturday morning next.

On Thursday, August 11, the house proceeded: when the petitioners' counsel insisted upon the disqualifying several persons, who voted for the sitting members, on account of their having received the charities, called the *Town-charity*, which is vested in feoffees, and *Meredith's charity*: and a book was produced, wherein was entered the account of the disposition of the *town-charity*. The counsel of the sitting members objected to the said book being read as evidence. When the counsel, on both sides, had been heard and were withdrawn,

It was resolved, That the account of *Jeffery Pyfing*, steward and bailiff of the lands and tenements belonging to the town of *Taunton*, in the county of *Somerset*, from Dec. 21, 1713, to Dec. 21, 1714 (inserted in a book entitled, *Taunton; An Account-book of the Profits of the Town-lands*, 1683), although not allowed and signed by the feoffees, be admitted to be read as evidence.

The counsel were called in again, and Mr. Speaker acquainted them with the said resolution.

Then the petitioners' counsel proceeded to disqualify several persons named in the said account, as having received the said charity money; and also examined witnesses to prove persons having worn the cloaths given by Meredith's charity; and also to some persons coming into the borough by certificate: and also examined witnesses to prove, that several persons, who lived in the borough and were house-keepers and pot-wallers, offered to poll for the petitioners, but were refused: and also to some partial proceedings (as was insisted) of the mayor and Mr. Yard (who was a justice of peace for the borough): after which the petitioners' counsel summed up their evidence, and the counsel were directed to withdraw.

The further hearing of the merits of the election was then adjourned till Saturday morning next.

* These terms will be found precisely defined by the house, when we come to the petition of Popham and Halliday.

Thursday,

Ordered, that the clerk of the crown do attend this house to-morrow morning, to amend the return for the borough of Taunton, in the county of Somerset, by razing out the names of Sir Francis Warre, bart. and Henry Portman, esq; and inserting the names of William Pynsent, esq; and James Smith, esq;*

The parliament, to which these gentlemen were thus, in consequence of their petition, returned, will be marked with censure in the English history: for, being elected to sit three, they passed an act to continue their seats in parliament for seven years. This was a violation of the constitution, and a stretch, if not a breach, of the trust invested in them, which, in the cool and impartial judgment of futurity, the plea of state necessity will not be deemed to justify. The effect of it has been greatly to increase the influence of the crown; and by rendering a seat in parliament, in proportion as it lengthens the term of enjoyment, a more important object of opposition, both on account of honour and emolument, the evils of contested elections, instead of being lessened, are aggravated by it.

The dissolution of the first septennial parliament was followed with a new contest. The candidates were George Dean, esq; of Pyrland, and Goodenough Earle, esq; of Barton, near Taunton; James Smith, esq; the last sitting member, and John Trenchard, esq; of Dorsetshire. The numbers that voted at the election, according to the mayor's poll, were,

For Mr. Trenchard, 432	Mr. Dean, 295
Mr. Smith, 432	Mr. Earle, 289

Mr. Trenchard and Mr. Smith, according to this statement of the poll, were returned representatives for the borough. The other gentlemen, Mr. Dean and Mr. Earle, demanded a scrutiny, which was refused. They then petitioned the house, complaining of the partiality of the mayor, aldermen, and body corporate; professing to disqualify 260 of the sitting members' voters, and to add to their own poll 66 persons, whose votes had been refused by the mayor†. But the petition did not come to a hearing, and the gentlemen returned kept their seats.

* The copy of the journal of the house of commons, and determinations of the honourable house of commons concerning elections, communicated by Mr. Norris.

† The case of the Taunton petitioners, communicated by Mr. Way.

Mr. Trenchard, descended from an ancient and wealthy family of Boxworth, in the county of Dorset, was the son of Sir John Trenchard, secretary of state to king William III. He was born in 1669. He was designed for the law and applied himself with great diligence to his proper studies, till he was called to the bar. He soon laid aside his profession, but gained great eminence of character, by his political writings and patriotic conduct. In 1698, assisted by Mr. Moyle*, he published a remarkable pamphlet, entitled, "An Argument shewing that a standing Army is inconsistent with a free Government; and absolutely destructive to the Constitution of the English Monarchy." This argument was further enforced by "A short History of standing Armies in England." These pieces attracted attention, and by the conviction they carried with them, contributed greatly to the procuring a majority in the parliament, which obliged the king, though with the utmost reluctance, to send home his Dutch guards and reduce the army to a moderate standard. Several occasional pamphlets, as various state occurrences arose, came from his pen, and met with a respectful reception from the public. But his two most distinguished works were his "Cato's Letters" and "The Independent Whig." The object at which the former pointed was the administration in state: the latter was directed against the hierarchy of the church. They both made their first appearance in the year 1720. The former after Mr. Trenchard's death, were collected together and published under the title of "Cato's Letters; or Essays on Liberty, civil and religious, and other important Subjects:" in 4 volumes 12mo. The editor, in his preface recommends them to the public, as containing impartial lessons of liberty and virtue, that will at all times be found seasonable and useful. Many papers of "The Independent Whig" were written, at Fleuke-house, Taunton, while Mr. Trenchard was there on the business of his election. They also, after his decease, were

* Mr. Moyle, the son of Sir Walter Moyle, was born at his father's seat, near Loo, in Cornwall, 1672, and died in 1726. He was a gentleman of a very amiable private character and possessed of many excellent virtues: he had the cause of civil and religious liberty so much at heart, that he never omitted any fair opportunity of contributing to its support. His learning was deep and extensive and his literary reputation was great abroad as well as at home. British Biography, vol. VIII. p. 202, 226.

collected together and continued by his associate, Mr. Gordon, a native of North-Britain: whom Mr. Trenchard first took into his house as his amanuensis: with whom he became united by the closest ties of friendship, by a kindred spirit, by similar studies and united labours*.

Mr. Trenchard, while he sat in the house, was a leading member; but he wore out the springs of life by intenseness of mind and close study: for he died in the 55th year of his age, on the 16th of December, 1723. The excellent virtues, which his private life displayed, were united to an ardent concern for the interest of mankind and of the British nation and government. His name is handed down, in the pages of biography, as that of "one of the worthiest, one of the ablest, one of the most useful men that ever adorned and blessed his country: his abilities were extraordinary, his virtues eminent, and his failings few and inconsiderable†."

The town of Taunton enjoyed the honour and services of such a representative, as we have seen, only for a very short time: and soon found itself involved in the evils and feuds of an election contest. On his decease, George Dean, esq; and Abraham Elton, esq; stood candidates for the borough. On which occasion there were two returns: one executed by the mayor, in favour of Abraham Elton esq; the other, by the constable and bailiffs and several of the inhabitants, in favour of George Dean, esq; This last was tendered to Walter Robinson, esq; high sheriff of the county of Somerset, who refused to accept the same, but accepted and executed the indenture of return offered by the mayor‡.

* Mr. Gordon was the editor of two valuable and useful collections: the first, entitled "A Cordial for low Spirits," in 3 volumes 12mo. The second, "The Pillars of Priestcraft and Orthodoxy shaken," in 2 volumes. These have been since re-published, and the latter enlarged into 4 volumes, by the Rev. Mr. Baron. Mr. Gordon's capital work was the translation of Tacitus, with additional discourses. He was, for many years, first commissioner of the wine licences: he was twice married: his second wife was the widow of his great friend Mr. Trenchard. He died 1750. *British Biography*, vol. 8. p. 262, 263. note.

† *British Biography*, vol. VIII. p. 261—266. 8vo.

‡ The constable's petition to the commons of Great Britain, communicated by Mr. Way.

The two succeeding elections, by a coalition of parties, were peaceable. But the violence of party, or the views of interest, or both, threw the town into tumult and confusion at the general election of 1741. When Sir John Chapman, of London, baronet, and John Buck, of Biddeford, esq; were elected in opposition to Francis Fane, esq; the representative in the two preceding parliaments, and Joshua Iremonger, of London, esq; who was a gentleman of established reputation for virtue and a strict regard to religion*. But the virtues, which form the private character, and the integrity which distinguishes the member of parliament, have frequently too little weight in turning the scale at elections.

The parliamentary history of Taunton presents a period of unanimity from 1741 to 1754. The general election, in that last year, was conducted on the principles of a coalition. John Halliday, esq; one of the representatives then chosen, had but a very transient enjoyment of his new dignity. His friends had formed great expectations from the knowledge, experience, and integrity, with which he had, for years, discharged the duties of one honourable and useful office in the nation: and promised themselves that he would have carried into a higher and more extensive sphere, the same activity of mind and the same firm attachment to the cause of religion and liberty, which he had manifested in a former post. But death disappointed their hopes and buried his rising honours in darkness. He was returned the 15th of April, and died on the 9th of June following, without having taken his seat in the house†.

The death of Mr. Halliday was followed with one of the severest contests, that ever disturbed a town. The parliament being adjourned, when Mr. Halliday died, a new writ was not issued out, till the meeting of it in the winter. But two gentlemen soon declaring themselves as candidates to represent the borough, the opposition was supported with spirit for about half a year. A space of time, which gave full scope for the display of every manœuvre and the exertion of every power, by which the parties could counteract each other's views.

* Dr. Hughes's Funeral Sermon for Mrs. Iremonger, 1744, p. 67, 68.

† Dr. Amory's Funeral Sermon for John Halliday, esq; p. 22.

The houses of entertainment were kept open during all this time ; by which a vast expence was incurred : habits of idleness and licentiousness were formed, to the great injury of families, and of the manufactory ; for orders could not be executed, but were returned : and the passions, on each side, were enflamed to that degree, that the election did not terminate without blood and the loss of several lives. The candidate, whom the country party supported, was Sir John Pole, bart. of Shute, in the county of Devon : the gentleman to whom the court party were attached, was, first, Robert Webb, esq; a representative in a former parliament ; and, on his declining the contest, they took up Robert Maxwell, esq; who was returned ; but, so great was the rage of a disappointed mob, he was carried from the poll to his lodgings, at the great risk of his life, which had a narrow escape from their violence. The mischiefs of this election have left, in many minds, to this day, a painful remembrance ; and should teach future generations the evils of a long and *premature* contest.

A like scene of tumult and commotion was opening again in the year 1768. The candidates were lord Farnham and lord Thomond, in conjunction : and Edward Willes, esq; solicitor-general, and Alexander Popham, esq; Nearly as soon as the canvas was finished, Mr. Willes was made a judge, and to him succeeded, as a candidate, Nathaniel Webb, esq; The two lords, disgusted with some perfidious treatment they had received, in the desertion of one of their principal friends and managers, retired from the contest, and left the field to Mr. Popham and Mr. Webb ; who, without any obstruction, but from a temporary and faint opposition, by Sir William Yea, bart. of Pyrland, were returned on the 18th of March.

Mr. Popham, who now, for the first time, had a seat in the house, was of the family of Sir John Popham, the eminent and upright lord chief justice of the king's bench, in the reign of queen Elizabeth. The cause of humanity owes him great obligations for his share in several public acts of parliament, of a benevolent tendency, of which he was the father ; particularly for two, both passed in 1774 ; one, for preserving the health of prisoners in gaols, and the other, for abolishing the fees that had been taken from prisoners acquitted,

or

or discharged by proclamation for want of prosecution: who, by law, are presumed to be innocent, and are therefore under the protection and provision of this act, immediately, set free on such acquittal or discharge. There was a singular circumstance attending these benevolent statutes; that Mr. Popham had occasion to call the late Mr. Howard to the bar of the house, to prove the state and condition of the gaols, which he had then visited in his neighbourhood, in order to shew the necessity of the regulations recommended to parliament. This first introduced that philanthropist to public notice, who received the thanks of the house for his extraordinary humanity; which encouraged him to proceed in his humane exertions, and to carry his enquiries into the state of gaols, to the wonderful extent to which he afterwards pursued them. To Mr. Popham also the beneficiaries of Mr. Huish's charity are indebted for the advance of their annuity to 2s. 8d. per week, the original appointment of the founder, from 2s. to which it had fallen: as are all the felons in the different prisons in the county of Somerset for the addition of 1d. a day to the gaol allowance; which originated from his motion as chairman to the quarter-sessions held at Bruton, 1783.

The public, while this work is passing through the press, are now waiting the issue of a motion brought forward, this session of parliament, by Mr. Popham, for a bill to amend, and render effectual, the poor laws. "The objects of which are, first, To provide certain employment for poor labourers in husbandry, who were passed by in the statute of 43d of Elizabeth; wherein the legislature attended to the encouragement of trade, that was then in its infancy, and nothing else. Secondly, To allow the manufacturing labourer to follow his trade, as it shall happen to shift its situation, without being interrupted by parish-officers, or the danger of removal. Thirdly, To train the labourers in husbandry to habits of useful industry, to make them fond of home by kind treatment, to lessen their disposition to migrate, and consequently the danger of contamination; it being certainly true, that as far as vagrancy is prevented, the commission of crimes is prevented, and public morality is improved." The philanthropy, which distinguishes these measures, is the best encomium they can receive.

receive. The representative, whoever he be, that avails himself of his seat in parliament, to establish regulations so essentially connected with virtue and *humanity*, doth honour to the election of his constituents; and affords a striking document of the utility and importance of a vote for a member of parliament.

At the next election, Nathaniel Webb, esq; offered himself in conjunction with Edward Stratford, esq; under the countenance of the premier and with the support of the corporation: on the other side Alexander Popham, esq; and John Halliday, esq; appeared as candidates: which opposition drew on a serious and expensive contest: the final decision of which received the award of a committee of the house. The proceedings of it are too interesting to be passed over without a minute detail.

Nathaniel Webb and Edward Stratford, esqrs. were returned representatives for the borough, the 18th of October, 1774; against which return Alexander Popham and John Halliday, esqrs. and several inhabitants and electors of the borough of Taunton, lodged a petition with the honourable house of commons. On Friday the 24th of February, 1775, the committee was chosen*, and on Saturday the

* The committee consisted of the following gentlemen:

The committee consisted of the following gentlemen.	
Frederic Montague, esq; chairman, Sir James Pennyman, bart. Abel Smith, esq; Herbert Mackworth, esq; Hon. Charles Marsham, Sir Watkin Williams Wynne, bart. Beaumont Hotham, esq; Sir Henry Bridgeman, bart. Francis Annesley, esq; Sir William Bagott, bart. Christopher Griffith, esq; Jacob Wilkinson, esq; Anthony James Keck, esq;	<div>members for</div> <div>Higham-Ferrers. Beverley. Aldbrough, Yorkshire, Cardiff. Kent. Denbighshire. Wigan. Wenlock. Reading. Staffordshire. Berkshire. Berwick. Newton, Lancashire.</div>
Nominees.	
<div>Of the petitioners. Hon. Thomas Howard, Of the fitting members. Viscount Lisburne</div>	<div>members for</div> <div>St. Michael. Cardiganshire.</div>
Counsel.	
For the petitioners. Mr. Lee and Mr. Morris.	For the fitting members. Mr. Gould and Mr. Hotchkin.

25th of February it met: when the petitions were read, setting forth*, That the Mayor had rejected many legal votes, which were tendered for the petitioners, and admitted many illegal votes for the sitting members.

That the petitioners were duly elected, by a great majority of legal votes, and ought to have been returned.

That the sitting members, previous to, and during, the election, were guilty of bribery and corruption, by themselves and agents.

The last determination of the right of election in Taunton, 28th July, 1715†, proves, That in the borough of Taunton there is a clear distinction between *alms* and *charity*; which was admitted by the counsel on both sides. “Alms” means parochial collection, or parish relief: “Charity” signifies sums arising from the revenue of certain specific funds, which have been established, or bequeathed, for the purpose of assisting the poor.

It was agreed on both sides, agreeable to the determination of the house, on the 27th of August, 1715, on the petition then before it, That neither alms nor charity disqualify an elector in Taunton, unless they have been received within a year before the election.

* The petitions also brought forward some special charges against the mayor, namely, That, as returning officer, he had procured himself to be appointed mayor, to answer election purposes, and had, from unnecessary adjournments, protracted the poll from the 10th of October, when it began, to the 18th.

It was admitted, by the counsel for the petitioners, that the mayor was legally elected: but a great deal of evidence was gone into, to shew that he was not advanced to the mayoralty in *regular rotation*, but had got into the office for the purpose of promoting the interest of the sitting members, and had acted as the petitions stated, at the election.

After a considerable time had been spent in hearing this sort of evidence; the chairman, by the direction of the committee, asked the counsel, whether they wished to lay such a charge against the returning officer, as might induce the committee to report *specialy* against him; or, whether they intended to affect the numbers on the poll, by any undue act or acts of the returning officer. The answer to both questions was in the negative. They said, they only meant to give a *general idea* of his partiality. The committee, therefore, neither acquitted, nor condemned, the returning officer: but were of opinion, that the enquiry into his conduct was not necessary to the decision of the merits of the election, and consequently *waved* such enquiry. Douglas' History of the Cases of Controverted Elections, vol. I. p. 367—369.

† See page 77.

It was agreed, That a *pot-waller** is a person who furnishes his own diet, whether he be a housekeeper, or only a lodger.

And it was agreed, That, to be a pot-waller, qualified to vote at Taunton, it has always been understood, both before and since the determination, in 1715, That such person must have a *legal parochial settlement in the borough*. The counsel for the sitting members thought, that gentlemen of fortune were excepted out of this rule ; but there does not seem to be any principle on which such a distinction can be supported.

The counsel for the petitioners said, That the journals of the house have recognized, that *apprentices* cannot be pot-wallers qualified to vote.

The numbers on the poll, as produced by the returning officer, were as follows :

For Nathaniel Webb, esq;	-	260
The Hon. Edward Stratford,		240
John Halliday, esq;	-	202
Alexander Popham, esq.	-	201

The counsel for the petitioners proposed to disqualify of the voters for the sitting members,

As having received the town charity		114
churchwarden's charity		2
As Chelsea pensioners	-	3
As not having settlements in Taunton	-	19
As not answering the definition of pot-wallers		15 or 16
As certificate men	-	2 or 3
As apprentices	-	2
As bribery agents	-	2
Total	-	159

If

* Before the reformation there was in every parish a church-house, to which belonged spits, pots, crocks, &c. for dressing provisions. Here the house-keepers met and were merry and gave their charity. See Holt's characters of the kings and queens of England, vol.II. p.180. Query, whether this custom doth not point out the origin and the precise idea of the political distinction of rank implied by the word pot-waller. By this custom it became a visible characteristic

If they succeeded in this, they said there would remain a clear majority for the petitioners : but that, at all events, for they did not foresee what objections there might be to their own votes, they would prove the charge of bribery so directly and palpably, as to disqualify the fitting members and make the election void as to them.

In the course of the cause it was settled, that *Chelsea pensioners might vote*.

Posterior to the determination in 1715, in the progress of the same cause, it was made an objection to certain voters, that they were certificate-men. From this circumstance the counsel for Mr. Halliday and Mr. Popham inferred, that it was understood, at that time, that such persons were not entitled to vote : and, after some argument, it was agreed by the counsel for the fitting members, that, by the *lex loci*, *certificate-men cannot vote for this borough*.

The counsel for the fitting members endeavoured to prove fraud in the distribution of the charities, with a view to election purposes ; and they brought witnesses to impeach the credit of those who had given positive evidence of bribery, by the agents of the fitting members.

On their part they proposed to disqualify of the votes for the petitioners,

On account of the town and Meredith's charities	-	2
As having received alms, and the town charity	-	1
On account of the town charity, and having no settlement		7
As having received the town charity, though their names were not entered in the constable's book, who is the person appointed to distribute that charity	-	3
As being the turnpike-man	-	1
As having no settlement	-	7
As not answering the definition of pot-wallers	-	7
As certificate-men	-	3
Total	-	31

characteristic of a specific ability and independence attached to those who furnished their own provisions ; in opposition to those who eat of the food of others as servants, or partook of it, as beneficiaries. The custom probably arose from the scarcity of chimnies, as houses were built with only one fire place. In early times this distinction might carry great weight and respect in it, on account of the scarcity of money and the prevalence of a state of villainage, which would render a gift of victuals a valuable kind of alms, and make a power of providing their own table to be considered as a degree of opulence.

N

They

They also endeavoured to prove bribery on the petitioners.

The cause lasted from the 24th of February to the 16th of March. On that day the committee, by their chairman, informed the house that they had determined :

That John Halliday, esq; and Alexander Popham, esq; were duly elected, and ought to have been returned*.

This determination gave great satisfaction to the country, as well as to that part of the town, who had asserted their own privileges against the combined influences of the minister and the corporation. On the 16th of March Mr. Halliday and Mr. Popham made their public entry into Taunton, accompanied by a great number of gentlemen; forming a cavalcade of near a thousand horse and many coaches. They alighted at the bottom of the parade, and walked, under a triumphal arch, up to the market-house, where an entertainment was provided in the assembly-room: the day was spent with great joy and conviviality†; and concluded with a crowded assembly and general illumination.

The occasion indeed was singular; and the grounds of joy, considered in a *constitutional* view, just: and, to the members, and those other gentlemen‡, who, animated by patriotic principles, were particularly active in supporting the petition, public gratitude was due for their exertions at that season.

It would be the dignity of all bodies corporate to confine themselves within their peculiar province, which is the administration of justice, and the maintenance of a good police. Neither the constitution of the nation, nor that of such a borough as Taunton, invests them with any specific prerogatives in elections: but there they are on a level with any other townsmen and fellow-citizens. As to the interference of the minister at an election, instead of being sought to give weight to a party, it ought to be rejected and opposed as inimical to our constitution and liberties; as transgressing the bounds of his province,

* Douglas' History of the Cases of Controverted Elections, vol. I. p. 366—375.

† From a memorandum communicated by Mr. Norris.

‡ Posterity should know their names: amongst others Mr. John Norman, Mr. Joseph Melhuish, Mr. John Clifsome grocer, Mr. Joseph Jeffries, Mr. Luke Noble; and Mr. John Noble will be particularly remembered, for their vigour and zeal in the public cause, at that time.

and

and converting the power, which the people possess in the right of election, to controul the crown, into an engine of effecting the views and spreading the influence of the crown, to their own injury, if not ruin. Yet the writer of this has heard a new-elected representative, led away by grounded esteem and partial friendship, address the court, after the close of a poll, in a panegyric on the minister of the times; as if he had been elected to act as *his* servant, rather than the deputy of the people, to watch and protect *their* rights.

The election, of which we are speaking, brought after it serious consequences. It was followed by various actions for bribery, and the mayor, at the suit of each member, was prosecuted for a false return: on one he was acquitted; and on the other convicted: he was also convicted on an action for refusing the vote of a reputable house-keeper, who, at the time, was also church-warden, on the plea of having before admitted to poll a partner in the same house, and having laid it down as a rule to receive only one vote out of the same house. Such actions must be considered as important; because they tend to guard the invaluable rights of election, and teach a lesson of great caution and impartiality to returning officers.

The contests, that have arisen since this great one, have scarcely been attended with more evils than a temporary bustle. At the general election in 1780, the candidates were, Alexander Popham, esq; John Halliday, esq; and John Roberts, esq; afterwards General Roberts, who had been the mayor in 1774. Mr. Popham declining to stand the poll, the other two gentlemen were of course returned. In 1782, the death of General Roberts brought on another election: when Sir James Langham, bart. and Mr. (now Sir Benjamin) Hammet, offered themselves to represent the borough: and the latter was elected. In 1784, a sudden dissolution of parliament renewed the struggles of electioneering. The candidates at Taunton were, Alexander Popham, esq; Benjamin Hammet, esq; and John Halliday, esq; The last of these gentlemen now judging fit to retire before the poll began, the other two resumed their seats in the house.

Since this work went to the press, the dissolution of parliament brought on, with a new election, a spirited contest. The candidates

were, on one side, Sir Benjamin Hammet and Alexander Popham, esq; the representatives of the town in the preceding parliament; and, on the other side, John Halliday and William Morland, esqrs. The poll opened on June the 28th, 1790, and did not close till the 13th of July, having lasted fourteen days; and having been carried on, by the mayor, with unremitting assiduity, for every day, except Sundays, from nine in the morning till seven o'clock, or later, in the evening. At the close the numbers were found to be, for

Sir Benjamin Hammet	291		John Halliday, esq;	239
Alexander Popham, esq;	257		William Morland, esq;	183

Upon which the two first gentlemen were declared duly elected. The contest, however, did not terminate here; but was resumed, and followed up by petitions, lodged with the house of commons on the 1st of December: one from the unsuccessful candidates, and the other from six electors, complaining of an undue election and return for the borough. On the 4th of December, an order was made, for taking the said petitions into consideration on Thursday the 24th of February, 1791. On the 16th of December, the speaker acquainted the house, that the petitioners, the candidates and electors, had not, nor had either of them, entered into a recognizance in respect of such petitions, according to the direction of an act, made in the 20th year of the reign of his present majesty, entitled, "An Act for the further Regulation of the Trials of Controverted Elections, or Returns of Members to serve in Parliament." Upon this the said act, on a motion of the house, was read; and the orders for taking the same petitions into consideration were discharged*.

A review of the election contests which divide our boroughs into violent parties, interrupt the friendly intercourses of life, raise the passions of men into a violent and unmanageable ferment, sanction, or are thought to sanction, tricking, dishonesty and oppression, introduce idleness and debauchery and a general dissoluteness of manners, and often terminate, not only in falsehood and a breach of promises, but in perjury: A review of contests, productive of such immoralities and evils, may sometimes tempt a considerate person to wish, that no town enjoyed the privilege of sending members to parliament. But it should be

* From the votes of the house, for the 16th of December, 1790.

considered,

considered, that the privilege, though it be abused, is most important; that the *existence of national freedom* dependeth upon it; that great as are the evils, which it often gendereth, they are local and temporary, much owing to the representation of the nation being so partial and unequal, to the long duration of parliaments, and to the want of further regulations with respect to the expences and modes of election, and the period of canvassing. But did not the power of electing members of parliament exist, the evil would be *national and permanent*; *perpetual despotism* would be the consequence. I cannot conclude this chapter with a more pertinent and interesting lesson, than what is contained in the following “striking passage from *Mezeray*, “the great historian of France; and which, being related as part of “a conversation with the celebrated *Hampden*, is doubly remarkable, “from the contrast between the ancient and very recent state of “that kingdom, and the fatality that attended the patriot, to whom it “is addressed:

“We had once in France, said he, the same happiness and the “same privileges which you have: our laws were made by representatives of our own choosing: our money was not taken from us, but “by our own consent: our kings, like yours, were subject to law “and reason. But now, alas! we are miserable, and all is lost. “Think nothing, sir, too dear to maintain the precious advantages “you have over us; and, if there be occasion, venture your life, “your estate, and all that you have; rather than submit to the miserable condition to which you see us reduced*.”

* The General Evening Post, from Nov. 19, to Nov. 21, 1789.

C H A P. IV.

On the trade, manufactures, and navigation of Taunton.

THIS town has been noted for its woollen manufactory, in which it carried on, for a number of years, a very large and extensive trade. Its trade may be traced back for four hundred and fifty years, to the reign of Edward III. to whose wife counsels belongs the glory of first bringing the woollen manufactories into this kingdom. Previously to his reign, though England was famous for the growth of wool, it does not appear, that the people knew how to make it into cloth, unless a very coarse kind called *freezes*. Our wool was exported into the Netherlands, and enriched that country : which gave occasion to the institution of the order of the *Golden Fleece*, by the duke of Burgundy. The king availed himself of the opportunity which offered, through the increasing intercourse between the two countries, in consequence of his marrying the daughter of the earl of Hainault, to send over, without suspicion, emissaries to the Netherlands, to ingratiate themselves with the Dutch labourers. Every allurements was thrown out to this class of men, who, in their own country, earned, with hard labour, a poor and scanty maintenance, to invite them to transport themselves and their art to England. On the fair prospect of living in a superior stile, enjoying a proportional profit of their labour, and forming conjugal connexions with the best families, numbers came over ; bringing with them their tools and their trade. Royal protections were granted to encourage their settlement. One was given by the king, at Lincoln, the 23d of July, 1331, to John Kemp, of Flanders, a weaver : and a like protection was afforded,

forded, by the king, at Westminster, the 3d of May, 1336, to fifteen weavers, of Zealand, who came here to exercise and teach their art. One, who settled in Gloucestershire, and was peculiarly eminent, as a clothier, had the surname of *Webb* given him by the king.

The persons, who left the Netherlands, coming several from one part, and several from another, made no sensible want of hands in their own country : but collected together here they formed a great number. It was judged best, in order to prevent, on any discontent, a general resolution of returning, and to diffuse the benefits of their art over the kingdom, to disperse them into different and remote counties : that they might establish, in each, different manufactories. The making of fustians was set up in Norwich ; of baize at Sudbury, in Suffolk ; of sayes and serges at Colchester, in Essex ; of broad cloths in Kent ; of kerseys in Devonshire ; of cloth in Worcestershire and Gloucestershire ; of Welch freezes in Wales ; of cloth at Kendal, in Westmoreland ; of Halifax cloths in Yorkshire ; of cloth in Hampshire, Berkshire, and Suffex ; and of serges at Taunton. The manufactory was greatly promoted by the discovery of fuller's earth, of superior quality to any in Europe. A new accession of foreigners, and the advancement of the woollen trade in England, were the consequences, in another period, of the cruelties of the duke of Alva ; whose tyranny drove over more Dutchmen to settle in this country*.

The woollen manufactory, since it was introduced and established in this country, and became the staple trade of the kingdom, hath suffered great changes and fluctuations. The wars of the emperor, Charles V. occasioned, in the reign of Henry VIII. a great stagnation of trade. The merchants could not venture into Spain for near a twelve month ; and the goods sent, from the different counties, to Blackwell-hall for sale, found no vent : few or no merchants were disposed to purchase, their warehouses being filled with cloths lying on hand. The labourers, of consequence, were thrown out of employ ; and great discontents arose, especially in Suffolk, where they would have fallen into some riotous acts, if the duke of Nor-

* *Acta Regia* ; or an Account of the Treaties in Rymer's *Fœdera*, vol. I. 8vo. p. 195, and Fuller's *Church History*, b. III. p. 111, 112.

folk had not wisely appeased them. The merchants were summoned to appear before cardinal Wolsey, who, in the name of the king, reprimanded them in an angry tone, for not purchasing the goods brought to market; and threatened them, that his majesty would open a new mart at Whitehall, buy of the clothiers, and sell again to foreign merchants. To which menace one of them pertinently replied; "My lord, the king may bye them as well at Blackwell-hall, if it please him, and the straungers will gladlier receive them there than at Westminster." "You shall not order that matter," said the cardinal, "and I shall first send into London to know what clothes you have in your hands, and that done, the king and his counsell shall appoint who shall bye the clothes, I warrant you." With this answer the Londoners departed*.

For a time this interference of the cardinal raised the spirits of the manufacturers, and the price of goods advanced. But, as it shewed the ignorance of the king concerning the nature of trade, so it had only a temporary effect. The foreign causes, which influenced the market, still existing, the price of cloths again fell, and the merchants were solicited to become purchasers.

After this the woollen manufactory revived: and the trade between England and the Netherlands (if we may believe Cambden) amounted, in his time, to above twelve millions of gold ducats. But, in 1564, it was almost entirely sunk. This was owing to the artifice of cardinal Granville, who had persuaded the governors of the Netherlands to prohibit the importation of English cloth. This led the English to settle a cloth staple at Embden, in East-Friesland. But, by the influence and management of a new ambassador from Spain, the two nations were reconciled: and it was agreed, that the treaty of commerce, made in the time of Maximilian I. called *intercurfus magnus*, should be observed on both sides.†

New encouragement and support was afforded to the woollen manufactory, in 1622, by a commission which passed the 21st of Octo-

* Grafton's Chronicle, vol. II. p. 1167, 68.

† Acta Regia, vol. IV. p. 71.

ber, for re-establishing it*. But the sources of commerce lie deeper, than in the language and promises of acts of state and national ordinances; and must be sought in the wants of mankind, and the freedom of their mutual intercourses. For, shortly after this, in 1639, spies sent, from Scotland, to discover the state of things in this kingdom, found in all the country great complaints of the decay of trade: those who were concerned in the different branches of it, from the farmer to the merchant, mutually casting the blame of it on one another: when it arose from the obstructions to traffic, which the civil dissensions of the times, and the troubles in Scotland, occasioned†.

Some years after this, the war with Spain, breaking out in 1665, operated greatly to the disadvantage of the woollen business. Before this, we find, that Taunton serges were in great reputation and demand, as fashionable wearing, being lighter than cloth, and yet thicker than many other stuffs. But such was the effect of that war, that "trade," says my author, "long since complained of to be "dead, is now lamented generally as buried, though hereafter it may "have a resurrection‡."

This hope was, afterwards, realised: for trade revived; and was carried to a great extent, after our civil distractions were composed. William III. gave his utmost countenance to every undertaking, that promised its advancement; several amendments were made, and many useful manufactories were established§. By the year 1704 trade arose in Taunton to a very flourishing height: for we are told, that 8500 persons were weekly employed in making its cloths||. The population of this town, about that period, was so great and rapid, that it was called the nursery for queen Anne's wars: but the number of its inhabitants would scarcely have been so considerable, had not the state of trade been prosperous.

The circumstance which gave Taunton the advantage, in point of manufactory, invited clothiers to settle in it, and drew on it the envy

* *Acta Regia*, vol. IV. p. 319.

† *The Scots-Scouts Discoveries*, by their London Intelligencer, in *Morgan's Phoenix Britannica*, vol. I. p. 460.

‡ *Fuller's Worthies of England*, p. 18, 19.

§ *Gee on Trade and Navigation*; a new edition, 1767, p. 30, 31.

|| *Chamberlayne's Present State of England*, p. 27.

of other towns, was the peculiar tenure of its estates. For every mortgage being entered in the castle books, which was a security against frauds, money could be borrowed there, above an hundred years ago, at 5l. per cent.*

Since this, nay, within these 60 years, the manufactory hath undergone great changes: of this the different fums, which the receivers for the county, at different periods, contracted to supply the town weekly, afford a proof. From 1727 to 1734 the cash delivered, on contract, to the tradesmen, for bills of exchange, amounted to 1500l. per week: and the trade seldom produced, at the same time, less than 500 moidores from Falmouth. For 10 years, from 1734 to 1744, there was not more than about 300l. cash delivered weekly: and, for the next seven years, from 1744 to 1751, it did not amount to more than 200l. per week†. The trade of Taunton is now reduced to a low ebb. Houses in the suburbs have fallen into ruins and been destroyed; and the number of inhabitants greatly decreased: while the woollen manufactory, in other places, and in the north particularly, has flourished. The decay of it, here, must be therefore sought in causes, that have had a local operation. Contested elections, by no means friendly to industry, must have proved particularly prejudicial to a trade, which, at times, could admit of no delay, in the execution of orders for goods, that must be ready for the sailing of ships, and the seasons of foreign fairs. The mischief of their influence, in this respect, was particularly felt in the continued and violent opposition of the year 1754. The demand for its goods was then great; but through the idleness and debauchery of the season it could not be answered. The orders being returned to the merchants, were sent, for execu-

* Yarranton's *England's Improvement, by Sea and Land*, 1677. "The manor of *Taunton Dean*, in *Somersetshire*," says this author, "is under a register, and there the land is worth 23 years purchase, although but a copyhold manor; and, at any time, he that hath 100l. a year in the manor of *Taunton*, may go to the castle and take up 2000l. upon his lands, and buy stuffs with the money, and go to London and sell his stuffs, and return down his moneys, and pay but 5l. in the 100 for his moneys, and discharge his lands. This is the cause of the great trade and riches about *Taunton Dean*. (O happy *Taunton Dean*!) What gentleman can do thus with free-lands? No, it is not worth 16 years purchase all England over, one place with another; and, if not timely put under a register, it will come to 12 years' purchase before long." P. 27, and also p. 31, 34, 100, 109.

† On the information of Mr. Partridge.

tion,

tion, to other towns; with which, the intercourse, being thus opened, was continued. The high price of labour affixed to some particular articles, at the first invention, though then an encouragement to ingenuity and industry, eventually has operated to the general detriment of trade. It furnished some of the more careful and provident labourers with the means of becoming manufacturers themselves; and of setting up looms in their own houses: and the number of competitors was greatly multiplied: who, not having capitals, that would enable them to give credit, and to carry on business with ease, were obliged, by abatements on the price, to procure a speedy return for their goods. The value of the articles being thus reduced at market, a reduction of wages necessarily followed. This could not be effected without warm struggles between the different classes of manufacturers: nor, when carried, without bringing on a corruption of the quality of goods, which must sink their estimation in foreign markets. The taste of those markets has also changed; and a preference, at them, is given, to woollen goods of a different kind; or rather to the various articles of the cotton manufactory. But the decline of the Taunton trade must be also ascribed, in a great degree, to the advantage which the manufacturers in the north have derived, over us, from the introduction and use of spinning machines: which would have been peculiarly useful here, not only to secure the exact and true execution of this part of the trade, but to supply the wants of hands for conducting it, which, for a number of years, was very sensibly felt.

To these causes, it is conceived, may be traced the decline of the trade of this town. Some of them, at least, will, sooner or later, affect other places and other manufactories. Whether the wisdom and activity of any spirited persons can do away their effects on Taunton, must be left for time to shew.

It is, however, a pleasure to one who feels an attachment to its interest, to reflect, that, though its woollen manufactories have declined, the town has not wholly lost its weight and importance, as a town of trade. The populousness and fertility of the country around it must continue to keep up its markets, and to preserve its internal commerce. And some new sources of trade have also opened in it.

Its navigation demands, in this respect, particular notice. The first, who formed the public spirited scheme of rendering the river Tone navigable, was John Mallet, esq; of Enmore, the last heir male of a very ancient and respectable family, which had formerly a seat there, and of whom Thomas Mallet was sheriff of the county of Somerset in the 18th of queen Elizabeth*. In the 13th of Charles I. a commission, under the great seal, was granted to John Coventry, esq; and other gentlemen, to treat and compound with all the owners of mills, lands, and tenements, that compensation might be made for such shares and parts of their property near the river, which Mr. Mallet would want for making the river navigable from Bridgwater to Taunton, and from thence to Bradford-bridge: this work was undertaken, and all persons concerned were satisfied, at the sole expence, and out of the estate of Mr. Mallet: and a warrant, to be passed into a patent, was also granted, by the king, to secure to this gentleman the quiet enjoyment of the navigation which he had effected. Mr. Mallet left one daughter, who married John Wilmot, the celebrated and last earl of Rochester, and carried the great estate of the Mallets into that family. This lady had only three daughters†: Anne Wilmot, afterwards married to Francis Greville, esq; son and heir apparent to the right honourable Foulke lord Brooke; Elizabeth Wilmot, afterwards countess of Sandwich; and Mallet Wilmot, who became lady viscountess Lisburne. These ladies, as the warrant granted to their grand-father, by some neglect or otherwise, miscarried, obtained from Charles II. while they were unmarried, letters patent, dated the 6th day of November, in the 36th year of his reign, granting to them, their heirs and assigns, to their own use, without any account whatsoever, the sole navigation of the said river, as far as Ham-mills, and no farther; and the full and only benefit and advantage thereof in the most ample manner.

In the year 1698, some gentlemen of the town of Taunton, to the number of thirty, formed the useful scheme of making and completing the navigation of the river Tone from Bridgwater to Ham-

* Shaw's Tour to the West of England, in 1788, p. 331.

† Shaw's Tour, p. 331.

mills,

mills, and from thence to the town of Taunton, and entered into a mutual agreement to apply for an act of parliament to effect the same, and to purchase of the countess of Sandwich, the lady viscountess Lisburne, and the lady Anne Greville, all their rights in the navigation of the river. A transfer of them was accordingly made by these ladies and their husbands, by a deed, bearing date the 4th of March, in the 10th year of the reign of king William, to John Friend, gentleman, in trust, who was one of those that engaged in this undertaking. The sum of three hundred and thirty pounds was paid for this purchase*. And, in the parliament of the 10th and 11th years of the reign of William III. an act was obtained to empower 30 gentlemen, under the name of *conservators*, to open, make, and keep navigable the river Tone, from the town of Bridgwater to Ham-mills, and from thence to the town of Taunton; and to authorize them to collect tolls to support the expences of making and preserving the navigation, and to entitle them to an interest of 6l. per cent. for all the monies they should lay out in the undertaking†.

The clerk of the peace is to be paid 2s. 6d. for recording the same accounts. The justices of the county, at the quarter-sessions, held at Bridgwater, 1710, passed an order: “that any trader on the river

* On the authority of papers and deeds belonging to the conservators of the river Tone.

† An abstract of an act, for making the river Tone navigable from Bridgwater to Taunton, passed in the 10th and 11th years of William III.

The powers, invested by this act in the conservators, extend to the cleansing, scouring, opening, making, and keeping navigable the river Tone, from the town of Bridgwater to Ham-mills, and from thence to Taunton: and, for this purpose, the act authorizes them to dig the banks of the river, or other stream and ditch adjoining to it, to cut away the roots of trees, and to remove every impediment—to cut a new channel, if there be occasion—to cut, scour, or open, any other stream or water course, that may be convenient—to erect bridges, wharfs, weirs, locks, turnpikes, pens, and other works—to lay and work materials on the banks—and to lay out a path on both sides of it.

The powers of the act further authorize the boatmen to use cattle for drawing up the vessels, &c. and to have, in convenient places, winches and other engines for that purpose.

The conservators are invested with their trust for life, except that any one may be removed, by a major part of the whole number, for misbehaviour; and when the number is reduced to 20, they are directed to choose other persons to make up the number 30. They are authorized to receive and hold any lands in fee, or for any other estate or term, and any gifts and legacies of goods, chattels and money: and conveyance of the same may be made to them without licence to alien in mortmain. A committee of five is made sufficient to any transaction relative to the ends of the bill, and to make contracts under their hands and seals, which shall bind all the conservators.

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river Tone should be at liberty, from time to time, and at convenient and seasonable times, to view and inspect the accounts of the conservators :

The tolls, appointed by the act, are, on every weigh* of coals, in any vessel passing from Bridgwater on or towards Ham-mills, 4d. and for every ton of other goods, 2d. and in proportion for any greater or lesser quantity ; to be paid and received at Knap-bridge. On every weigh of coals, from Ham-mills to or towards Taunton, a further toll, to be appointed from time to time by the conservators, or the major part of them, not exceeding 4s. and, on every ton of goods, a toll not exceeding 2s. to be paid at Coal-harbour. On every ton of goods passing down the river to or towards Bridgwater, a toll not exceeding 1s. to be paid and received at the first lock next to Taunton. On refusal or default of payment of these tolls, the conservators, by themselves, or their agents, are empowered to arrest the boats, with all their tackle, coals, and goods, till the duties be fully answered.

The limitations, to which the proceedings on this act are subjected, oblige the conservators, previously to doing the things authorized by it, for making the river navigable, to contract according to the manner it prescribes, for any loss or damage any persons or body corporate or politic, may sustain by the same. They are required to keep a true perfect account of all receipts and disbursements, to make up the same yearly to the 24th of June, and to lay them, with their vouchers, at the next ensuing general quarter-sessions of the peace for the county of Somerset, before the bishop of Bath and Wells, and the justices of the county for the time being, or any five of them, to be examined, on oath, and to be stated, corrected, and allowed by them ; a duplicate of the accounts signed by any five or more of them, it is enacted, shall be transmitted to, and kept in, the records of the sessions of the peace for the county of Somerset.

The limitations, in the act, further give the bishop of Bath and Wells, and the justices of the county, or any five or more of them, a power to make distribution of all monies that have not been laid out on the navigation, to the conservators and their assigns ; first for the payment of the interests of the monies advanced by them at the rate of 6l. per cent : and as often as there shall be any surplus for lessening the principal advanced, till the whole be discharged : any three, or more, of them may also appoint an examination of the accounts at any time, or place, they may judge fit, within the town of Taunton, or ten miles thereof : the appointment of the wages and salaries of the servants and officers of the conservators, of the receivers and cashier or treasurer (of whom they are empowered to take security) is subject to the correction of the bishop of Bath and Wells and the justices of the county or any five, or more, of them, at their first meeting after the nomination of any such officers : and such wages and salaries, if not disallowed within ten days, to be valid. The election of new conservators, when, by death or removal, the number is reduced to 20, must be made by the major part of the surviving conservators assembled for the purpose, after having affixed on the Market-Cross, in Taunton, six days notice thereof, in writing, and proclamation of its being made in the open market.

The provisions of this act extend farther than to the first and immediate object of it, the making and keeping the river Tone navigable : in the first instance, to the reduction of the tolls, and then to the support of a charity school ; after the conservators have been reimbursed their principal and interest advanced. The tolls, in that case, it appoints, shall be 1d. for every weigh of coals, and 1d. for every ton of goods, passing between Ham-mills and Bridgwater : and 1s. on every weigh of coals, and 6d. on every ton

* A weigh is defined to contain 48 bushels by heap of the measure used at Bridgwater at the time of the act being passed ; equal in quantity to 2 chaldrons, or 72 bushels Winchester.

servators: and that any conservator, to whom application should be made by any trader for this purpose, should direct him to the proper officer keeping such accounts*."

The tolls appointed under this act, and the powers which it invested in the conservators, did not prove so efficient as it was expected. The amount of the monies expended on the scheme, to the 24th of June, 1707, together with the interest, was the sum of three thousand five hundred fifty-six pounds, nine shillings, and five-pence farthing. Yet their undertaking, so far from being productive, was not completed: the river was not navigable in the winter, much less in the summer, for want of a lock, or half-lock, at a place called Round-island, cleansing a shoal called Broad-shoal, and doing other chargeable works. This state of things induced a petition to parliament, for another act to enable them to enlarge and improve the navigation of the river, and to increase the tolls. In this application, though it met with great opposition, they were supported by petitions, sanctioning their case and request, from the justices of the peace at the quarter-sessions for the county, from the corporation at Bridgwater, from the principal inhabitants of both the parishes in Taunton, of the towns of Chard, Ilminster, Wellington, Milverton, Wiveliscombe, Langport, Collumpton, and Tiverton. Their petition was granted; and a second act, to secure the objects of it, was passed in the 6th year of the reign of queen Anne†. So that, at present, barges of about 15 tons each, loaded with coals and other heavy goods and merchandize, shipped for Bridgwater from Bristol and other ports, are brought quite home to the bridge.

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of goods, between Ham-mills and Taunton. The surplus of these tolls, and of the product of all gifts and grants, after the repair of the works on the navigation, shall, in this case, be applied in building one or more hospitals, or otherwise, for the education or maintenance of such poor children of the parishes of St. Mary Magdalen and of St. James, Taunton, as shall become chargeable to the said parishes. These hospitals are to be regulated and governed by rules and orders made from time to time by the conservators, and first approved by one or both the judges of the assize and *nisi prius* for the county of Somerset.

* Goddard's Extract from the Sessions-Rolls, p. 67.

† From books and papers belonging to the conservators.

Abstract of an act of parliament, for the more effectual making and keeping the river *Tone* navigable from Bridgwater to Taunton, passed in the 6th year of queen Anne, on the 23d of October, 1707.

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But, notwithstanding the aids afforded by this act of parliament, the undertaking did not prove productive, till the year 1717. When the debt, on the river, inclusively of the interest at 6l. per cent. on the monies expended, amounted to the sum of five thousand six hundred ninety-seven pounds, eight shillings, and ten-pence : and, on this sum, the dividends have, ever since that time, been made.

When the affairs of the company were, apparently, placed on a firm footing, and they began to reap some advantage from that useful scheme, they met with an unfriendly opposition to the enjoyment of the fruits of their expences and exertions. It had been originally included in their plan, and enacted by the first act, as appears by the abstract before, that when the tolls should prove sufficient to discharge all the principal and interest of the monies advanced to make the river navigable, that then the produce should be applied to the support of a charity school.

On the ground of this provision, Mr. James Dare, of Taunton, goldsmith, exhibited a petition, in 1734, to the commissioners for charitable uses for the county of Somerset ; setting forth, that the conservators of the river Tone had been paid the principal money and interest by them disbursed for making the said river navigable. In consequence of this petition, a decree was made by Thomas Carew, esq; and other commissioners for charitable uses, against the conser-

The preamble recapitulates the first act, so far as relates to the tolls it enacted, and the application of them ; and states the objects of the new bill ; viz. a power to erect a lock, or half-lock, at Knap-bridge, near Round-island, to cleanse, dig, and deepen, a certain shoal, called Broad-shoal, and to levy additional tolls to defray the expences of these new works. The act, accordingly, authorizes the conservators to execute these works, and, from the building or erecting of the said lock, or half-lock, it appoints them to receive, at the same, an additional toll of 1s. for every weigh of coals, and of 6d. on every ton of goods, contained in any boat, or vessel, that shall pass through the said lock, or half-lock, and so in proportion for larger or lesser quantities : which tolls, after the conservators shall be reimbursed their principal monies and interest, shall be reduced to 2d. on every weigh of coals, and 1d. on every ton of goods. The tolls to be received at Coal-harbour, which before were left, in a degree, to the discretion of the conservators, were, by this act, fixed at 2s. 8d. for every weigh of coals, and 1s. 6d. for every ton of goods.

This act also, in order to remedy certain disputes and controversies that had arisen on the construction of the former, relative to liberty granted to boatmen, &c. of going on the banks and grounds near the river, to haul up boats, &c. enacts, that it shall not be lawful for them to do this, till a path shall be set out for that purpose by the conservators, and satisfaction shall be made to the owners of the land.

vators.

vators. To this decree the conservators made an appeal. The effect of the decree was, that for four years, while the affair was pending in chancery, the justices at the quarter-sessions suspended allowing and signing the accounts of the conservators, till July, 1737: when, by the order of the high court of chancery, the decree had been reversed. This order gave a legal authority to the proceedings of the conservators, and afforded an honourable testimony to the truth and integrity of their accounts.

The following tables will enable the reader to form an idea of the utility of the navigation and its increase.

The tolls for eleven years, from June 1717.				Ditto for ditto, from June 24, 1778, to June, 1789.			
		<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>			<i>l.</i> <i>s.</i> <i>d.</i>
1718	—	379	4	5½	1779	—	620 11 1
1719	—	347	2	10½	1780	—	667 14 1
1720	—	368	9	1½	1781	—	587 13 8
1721	—	342	13	10	1782	—	621 5 6
1722	—	430	7	9¼	1783	—	633 4 1
1723	—	407	5	6	1784	—	658 13 2
1724	—	361	12	10½	1785	—	594 17 3
1725	—	390	14	5½	1786	—	693 9 3
1726	—	431	16	0½	1787	—	710 7 11
1727	—	404	15	11	1788	—	737 5 3
1728	—	387	12	4½	1789	—	668 3 4

The preceding statement clearly proves, that the navigation of the river Tone is on the improvement, and productive of encreasing benefits to the town and neighbourhood. The town of Bridgwater must have derived from it essential advantages. About a twelvemonth since its shipping amounted to 34 vessels, 1707 tons, 128 men*. But I am not possessed of information, on which to form a comparative estimate of its trade, at present, with its state previously to the navigation of the river Tone. It is certain, that the coal trade has, of late years, much increased there and in Taunton.

* From the information of the Rev. Mr. Watfon, of Bridgwater, on the authority of the collector.

Among other resources of employment for the poor, and as causes giving a new and different motion to the springs of trade in the town, in some degree counterbalancing the decline of its woollen manufactory, must be mentioned the erecting of silk mills.

The art of making fine *Italian organzine*, or thrown silk, out of fine raw silk, which was formerly bought with our money, ready worked in Italy, was first discovered, with the utmost difficulty and hazard, and introduced into this kingdom by *Sir Thomas Lombe*. The brother of this gentleman, whose head was well turned for mechanics, supported by Sir Thomas' fortune, went to Savoy to make a discovery of the structure of a large and curious machine there, by which all the organzine silk was made, and which was guarded with the utmost jealousy from the knowledge and inspection of other nations: for the king of Sardinia made it death to discover the invention, or to attempt to carry it out of his dominions. Mr. Lombe, after a long stay and great expence in that country, found means to see this engine so often, and to pry into the nature of it so narrowly, that he made himself master of its structure and of all the different parts and motions belonging to it. After his return to England, Sir Thomas Lombe, under the protection of a royal patent, in 1718, erected a machine, on the same plan, at Derby. It was three years in building, and contained 26,586 wheels, and 97,746 movements. A water wheel gave motion to all the other wheels and movements, of which any one might be stopt separately. This wheel went round three times in one minute; and worked every time 73,726 yards of silk thread. One fire-engine conveyed warm air to every part of the machine, and one regulator governed the whole work.

The whole term of 14 years, for which the patent was granted, through the various difficulties attending so new and great an undertaking, was almost expired, before the manufactory could be brought to perfection. On this account, on January the 28th, 1732, Sir Thomas Lombe applied to parliament to take his case into consideration, and to grant him a further term of years for the sole making and using the said engines, or such other recompence as to the house should seem meet.

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To prolong the term, or to grant a new term to the patentee, was considered as a measure, which would invest the patentee with a power to disturb all other inventions any way resembling his own, and prevent the nation's making any benefit of his invention. A bill, therefore, for granting 14,000*l.* to Sir Thomas Lombe, as a recompence for his introducing the machine for working Italian organzine, passed, and had the royal assent the 3d of April, 1732*.

This act left the way open for ingenuity and industry to avail themselves of the invention, and to erect similar works in other parts of the kingdom: which has been done in Sherborne, Dorsetshire, and in other towns. In 1781, Messrs. Vansommer and Paul, silk-mercers, in Pall-mall, London, purchased of Mr. Noble, of Taunton, a large brewhouse and the adjoining premises, situated in that part of High-street, which is commonly called Shuttern; and of Mr. Pounsbury, baker, a right to use the water of the contiguous mills. These purchases, by erecting a large building and suitable wheels, they converted into a machine, for making thrown silk out of fine raw silk, on the model of that at Derby. In 1783, Mr. Wilmot, the proprietor of a similar silk mill, at Sherborne, and Mr. John Norman, of Taunton, purchased, of the assignees of Messrs. Vansommer and Paul, this machine, and the premises on which it was erected: and continued to work it, in partnership, till the death of Mr. Wilmot, in 1787: since which time it is become the sole property and concern of Mr. Norman. It is an advantage belonging to such works, that they employ a number of hands, and of children from a very early period of life. The machine, of which we are speaking, generally supplies, with labour, from 80 to 100.

Mr. Vansommer was not disheartened by the unfortunate circumstances which obliged him to relinquish his first undertaking. In 1781, he purchased some new buildings in Cannon-street, and converted them into houses for carrying on the different branches of the silk manufactory: which have since become the property of Mr. John James, of London, under the direction of Mr. Nevil, the superintendant of the works. They consist of machinery, on a small

* Gentleman's Magazine, for April, September, and October, 1732.

scale, for throwing of filk, which is set in motion by a woman treading the large wheel: and of thirty-two looms for weaving Barcelona handkerchiefs, tiffanies, Canterbury muslins, modes, florentines, and ladies shauls. On the whole works 60 hands are employed*.

It may be reckoned an advantage, which the town of Taunton has gained, in point of trade, that, besides the establishment of such works, it is become, of late years, much the resort of persons of independent fortunes; great part of which, as far as concerns the necessary articles of life, must be expended in the town and its neighbourhood, and occasion a considerable circulation of cash; notwithstanding the ungenerous, if not mistaken, œconomy, which prevails, in all places, of purchasing many articles at the capital, to the discouragement and injury of home exertions and industry. The accession of genteel families to the town is much owing to the modern improvements, in various respects, which have taken place, and which another chapter will describe.

* On the information of Mr. Nevil.

C H A P. V.

The political transactions and revolutions, in which Taunton has been the scene of action.

WE must now turn, from the view of the mild and enriching operations of trade and commerce, to scenes of tumult, distress and blood. Taunton has not been more noted for the former, than it has been distinguished for the latter. The few particulars and short accounts of the different fates of its castle, which we have been able to collect, are sufficient to shew that it had a share in the contests of the Saxon kings, and in the civil wars between the houses of York and Lancaster.

But it became particularly the theatre of military action in the reign of Henry VII. After this prince had been seated, about twelve years, on the throne, he met with a competitor for the crown in a person, who bore the name of Perkin Warbeck : he was represented in the proclamation issued out against him, by the order of king Henry, to be the son of John Osbecke, a converted Jew, comptroller of Tournay in Flanders. But he himself founded his pretensions to the crown, on his being the real duke of York, Richard, the younger son of king Edward IV. who, with his brother, had been supposed to have been slain, in the tower, by the order of his uncle Richard III. and the curious investigations, of a very ingenious modern writer*, have given great credibility to his claims. It is certain, that, whether it was owing to a conviction of this being his real

* Mr. Horace Walpole, in his "Historic Doubts :'' a work, which goes to clear up the character of king Richard III. from several charges, which have, for ages, entailed an odium upon it. The lord treasurer, Oxford, who read as much of history, and with as much judgment, as any man of his time, thought the arguments, adduced by Mr. Walpole, to prove that Perkin Warbeck was the real duke of York, had the appearance of being conclusive. Granger's Biographical History, vol. I. 8vo. p. 24. note.

character,

character, or to jealousy and resentment, he was patronized and assisted, on the authority of these pretensions, by the duchess dowager of Burgundy, sister to Edward IV. and by the Scotch king, who consented to give him, in marriage, a daughter of the earl of Huntley, one of the blood royal of Scotland. Assisted by this patronage, Perkin Warbeck, for five years, harassed the government, and alarmed the mind of Henry; and involved him in a war with the Scotch king. This war afforded him a pretext for demanding of his subjects a subsidy of an hundred thousand pounds, to defend the nation.

The operation of these measures involved in it the town of Taunton. The subsidy was raised with great rigour; and the provost of Penryn, the receiver of it in Cornwall, rendered himself particularly obnoxious to the poor, but robust and spirited, people of that county: a great number of whom, under the conduct of Thomas Flammock, a lawyer, and Michael Joseph, a farmer, took arms and rose up against the provost; who fled from their rage to Exeter, and, being pursued thither, withdrew into Somersetshire, and sought security in the castle of Taunton. Here he was seized by his countrymen and killed. Elated with this success and revenge, they continued their march to Wells, where they were joined by lord Audley*: from hence, under his lordship's banners, as their general, they proceeded through Salisbury and Winchester, to Blackheath, where the king drew up his forces to give them battle. Being vigorously attacked by lord Dawbeney, who commanded one body of the royal army, they were routed, 2000 were killed, and the rest were forced to surrender. Lord Audley was beheaded on Tower-hill; and Flammock and Joseph were hanged, drawn, and quartered, at Tyburn, the 24th of June, 1497†.

This defeat only irritated, instead of subduing, the spirit of the Cornishmen: and urged them to new efforts against oppression.

* James Touchet, lord Audley, was of a very ancient and honourable family, and having married Joan, daughter of Fulk Bouchier, lord Fitzwarren, and sister to the earl of Bath, became popular in Devonshire and Cornwall. He was a nobleman, from whom the present earl of Castlehaven is, in a direct line, descended. Locke's MS.

† Locke's MS.

They

They looked out for a popular leader, and their views turned to Perkin Warbeck. There was wisdom in this choice, as the nature of his claims gave dignity to the cause, and was calculated to draw a great part of the nation, still attached to the house of York, into the same measures. He was invited from Ireland, whither he had retired after a defeat which the Scotch king had received. Acceding to the proposal from Cornwall, he landed at Whitland-bay, in the northern coast of that county; assumed the name of Richard IV. and, by public proclamation, invited the people to his standard. He raised a considerable force, and attempted to take the city of Exeter by storm. Failing in that design, he advanced to Taunton, where, on the 20th of September, 1497, he mustered his forces, put the town in great consternation, seized the castle, and seemed determined to make a stand. But being closely pursued by Edward Courtney, earl of Devonshire, while the king advanced against him with a formidable army, and finding himself deserted by his men, who, disheartened by the spirited defence made at Exeter, withdrew from him, in various secret companies, his firmness forsook him, he deserted his army, and, with 60 horsemen, fled to New Forest, in Hampshire; where he took sanctuary in Bewley monastery, not far from Southampton*.

Previously to his flight, circumstances threatened, that Taunton would become the scene of a bloody action. Desperation had enflamed the Cornishmen, and they had appeared determined to gain a victory, or not to live a day longer. The king, upon hearing that Warbeck was gone to Taunton, hastened thither with all speed; attended by Edward, duke of Buckingham, a young prince of great courage and singular good parts, and with a great company of noblemen, knights, and gentlemen, prepared and furnished for the field of battle. Amongst those, who formed the king's army, were, Sir Alexander Baynam, Sir Maurice Berkley, Sir Robert Tame, Sir John Guise, Sir Robert Poyntz, Sir Henry Vernon, Sir John Mortimer, Sir Thomas Tremayle, Sir Edward Sutton, Sir Amias Pawlett, Sir John Bickenell, Sir John Sapcottes, Sir Hugh Lutterel, and Sir Francis Cheyney. When the king approached the town, whether

* Locke's MS.

he were averse from delay, or feared the turn of fortune's wheel, he sent before him Robert lord Broome, lord steward of his house, Eyles lord Dawbeney, his chief chamberlain, and Sir Rice ap Thomas, to make the attack and begin the battle: while he followed with his forces, either to refresh them, after the armies should cope, with new succours, or, before he was seen, to beset the enemy in the rear. But the flight of Warbeck superseded his policy, prevented the risk of an engagement, and left to the king the enjoyment of an unbloody triumph*.

These transactions serve to give us an idea of the importance, in which Taunton was held, centuries back, by the different parties in our civil contests. It remained a place of considerable strength till the unhappy civil wars, in the reign of Charles I. when it became an object of vigorous struggle between the royal and parliamentary forces, which should possess its fortress: for it was considered as the key to the west of England.

It is remote from the nature and design of this work to enter into a minute and full account of the grounds of the civil wars. We would only observe in general, that the design of Charles I. to extend the prerogative beyond the bounds of the constitution, gave rise to them. This design appeared in various arbitrary and oppressive measures. The king, in different instances, invaded the privileges, and attempted to annul the power, and even the existence, of the parliaments; frequently dissolving it in displeasure, and governing, twelve years, without it. He exacted money of his subjects in different illegal ways, particularly under the titles of *ship-money* and *loans*.

The former was raised by a writ in form of a law, and directed to every county in England, to provide a ship of war, and send it by such a day, to such a place, amply equipped and manned. Of Somersetshire, was required one ship, of 640 tons, and with 256 men. These writs were accompanied with instructions, to the sheriff, to levy upon his county, instead of a ship, such a sum of money. From whence this tax had its denomination. It produced to the king's coffers, for some years, the annual sum of 200,000l. It is remarkable, that

* Grafton's Chronicle, vol. II. p. 924, 925.

the king was advised to adopt this method of bringing money into his exchequer, on the authority of some old precedents, by his attorney-general, Mr. Noye; who, before he was preferred by the court, had distinguished himself by opposition to it; and had "always been ready to entertain any cause whereby he might clash with the prerogative*."

Another mode of supplying his wants, without the grant of parliament, which the king pursued, was, by letters, under his privy seal, into the several counties of England, directed to those who were supposed best able to lend, requiring, by way of loan, such sums as each were taxed at. They were accompanied with letters, by one of the king's servants, exacting an immediate attention to the king's requisition, under the threat of being summoned before the king in person. A specimen of these letters, from one sent to Robert Lucas, esq; a gentleman in the neighbourhood of Taunton, is given below†.

The

* Howell's Letters, p. 248, 249. 1754.

† CHARLES R.

Trusty and Wel-beloved, We greet you well. Whereas all Our Subjects of the Kingdome of *England* and Dominion of *Wales*, are both by their Allegiance and the Act of Pacification bound to resist and suppress all such of Our Subjects of *Scotland*, as have in a hostile manner already entred or shall hereafter enter into this Kingdome. And by Law, your Personall service, attended in a warlike manner for the resistance of this Invasion, may be required by Vs, which We Desire to spare, Chusing rather, to invite your assistance for the maintenance of Our Army in a free and voluntary expression of your Affections to Our Service and the safety of this Kingdome. And whereas the Members of both Houses of Parliament Assembled at *Oxford*, have taken into their Consideration the necessity of supporting Our Army, for the Defence of Vs and Our People against this Invasion, and for the Preservation of the Religion, Lawes and Liberties of this Kingdome, and thereupon have agreed upon the speedy raising of the Summe of one hundred Thousand pounds by Loane from particular Persons, towards the which themselves have advanced a very Considerable Proportion, and by their Examples hope, That Our well-affected Subjects throughout the Kingdome will in a short time make up the Remainder, whereby We shall not only be enabled to pay and recruite Our Army, but likewise be enabled to put Our Armies in such a Condition, as Our Subjects shall not suffer by Free-Quarter or the unrulinesse of Our Souldiers, which is now in present Agitation, and will (We no way doubt, by the Advice of the Members of both Houses Assembled) be speedily effected. We doe towards so good a worke, by the Approbation and Advice of the said Members of both Houses here Assembled, desire you forthwith to lend Vs the Summe of *Twenty Pounds* or the value thereof in Plate, toucht Plate at five shillings, untoucht Plate at foure shillings foure pence, *per ounce*; and to pay or deliver the same within seven daies after the Receipt hereof, to the hands of the High-Sheriffe of that Our County, or to such whom he shall appoint to receive the same, (upon his acquittances for the Receipt thereof) who is forthwith to returne and pay the same at *Corpus Cbristi*

Q

Colledge,

The terrors held forth in these requisitions were not meant to raise vain fears : but were actually productive of severe evils, to those who opposed this measure. In London, some aldermen, who refused to deliver in a list of those who, in their wards, might be judged able to lend, were committed to prison ; and divers gentlemen, through the kingdom, who denied the loan (in the whole 22 knights, and others of birth and character, to the number of 78) were thrown into gaols, where many of them contracted such diseases, as cost them their lives*.

Such measures could not fail to rouse the indignation of a free people. The whole kingdom became the seat of war : and every county flowed with the blood of fellow-citizens : while some joined the parliament, and others enlisted under the royal standard.

In 1645 the king had all the county of Somerset in his power, except Taunton. The town had been taken by the parliament's forces in August, 1642. About this period Sir Ralph (afterwards lord) Hopton, a gentleman of great mental and bodily accomplishments, and trained to war in the Low Countries, had rendered the king most important services in the west ; where, in a few months, he raised a most formidable army, and fortified no less than 40 garrisons†. To check the progress of his influence, and to prevent the dangers

Colledge in Oxford, to the hands of the Earle of Bath, the Lord Seymour, Mr. John Ashburnham, and Mr. John Fettiplace, or any of them, who are appointed Treasurers for the receiving and issuing thereof by the said Members, (by whose Order only the said Money is to be disposed) and to give Receipts for the same, the which We Promise to repay as soon as God shall enable Us ; This Summe being to be advanced with speed, We are necessitated to apply Our Selves to such Persons as your selfe, of whose Ability & Affection We have Confidence, giving you this Assurance, that in such further Charges, that the necessity of Our lust Defence shall inforce Us to require of Our good Subjects, your forwardnesse and disbursements shall be Considered to your best advantage. And so presuming you will not faile to expresse your Affection herein, We bid you Farewell. *Given at Our Court at Oxford, the 14. day of February, in the Nineteenth year of Our Raigne. 1643.*

By the Advice of the Members of both Houses Assembled at Oxford.
Essexfett. To Robert Luckis of St. Deacons. ED. LITTLETON C.

The demand in the above letter may appear to be sanctioned by parliament. The reader will observe therefore that the members mentioned by the king were only such as had deserted the parliament which met at Westminster or been disabled and had joined the king at Oxford. Whitelock's Memorials, p. 76.

* Welwood's Memoirs, p. 292, 308 ; and Oldmixon's History of the Stuarts, 90, 92.

† Granger's Biographical History, vol. II. p. 236, and Heath's Chronicle, p. 46.

threat-

threatened by his growing fortunes, Sir William Waller advanced into these parts, with a well furnished army: and taking possession of Taunton was particularly the object of the direction given to one body of the parliamentary forces. The views of the parliament, in the west, were greatly assisted by the conduct of Sir John Horner, Mr. Alexander Popham, and other gentlemen. Mr. Sampford, the high sheriff of Somerset, was attached to its interest. The principal gentry of the neighbourhood, the trained bands, the mayor and principal inhabitants of the town, aided, with horse and foot, the intention of securing this place for the parliament. When, on taking it, the houses of suspected persons were searched; in that of Mr. Browne, a popish recusant, they found 60 men's armour; in alderman Skinner's, arms for 20 men; and in Mr. Tucker's, the rent-gatherer, and steward to the bishop of Winchester, arms for 100 men, horse and foot, 20 barrels of gunpowder, 50 great saddles, and shot of all sorts. The search was made through the neighbourhood, and even the county: and from various places, inclusively of the towns of Bridgwater, Wells, Bath, Ilchester, Glastonbury, Ilminster, and others, they collected stores of ammunition and arms for, at least, 18,000 men, great saddles 150, light horses 150, and 10,000*l.* in money. All these articles were conveyed to the castle, in Taunton, and lodged there under the custody of the mayor and aldermen, with a sufficient guard*.

This attempt to secure and fortify Taunton in the interest of the parliament soon met with a temporary impediment and defeat. For, in the next year, the marquis of Hertford drove from hence the parliamentary forces, and took possession of it in favour of the king†. But the fruits of this victory were not long. For, in 1644, on the 8th of July, soon after the battle of Marston-moor, colonel Blake and Sir Robert Pye again took Taunton for the parliament. Colonel Reeves, who commanded the castle for the king, and his soldiers, had quarters given them to march to Bridgwater. There were found in the castle one demiculverin and ten other small pieces, two ton of match, eight

* Locke's MS. and Vicars' Jehovah Jireh, or Parliamentary Chronicle, 1644. p. 135.

† Locke's MS.

barrels of powder, store of arms and ammunition, with much household furniture and plenty of provisions*. This gave great strength to the interest of the parliament in the west; which was, about the same time, joined by 4000 volunteers at Chard, 3000 more at Cul-lumpton, and 2000 raised by colonel Ware, and entertained at Barn-staple. Colonel Popham was commanded to Taunton, to take charge of a regiment raised for him by the country†. But the violent spirit of the royal party, nevertheless, shewed itself in outrageous acts. Sir Francis Doddington meeting with a minister, on the road near Taunton, asked him, "Who art thou for, priest?" who answered, "For God and his gospel." Upon which Doddington shot him dead‡. Military efforts were also made to recover, for the king, this strong town: for, in the same year, 3000 of his forces besieged it: but the governor, colonel Blake, sending out a party against the besiegers, which fell upon them, killed and took many; among the rest some officers§.

For some following months things remained in a quiet state at Taunton: but, early in the spring of 1645, a large body of forces, to the amount of 10,000, marched to the attack of the town under lord Goring; "a man of ready wit, good understanding, and a clear head; but too mercurial to be at the head of an army, and too vicious to be in a station, where example could corrupt." He led his forces with valour and resolution, but kept them under no discipline. "That part of the country, where his army lay, was a scene of ravage and licentiousness||." The butcheries, rapes, and robberies they committed, fixed on them the opprobrious name of "Goring's crew:" and left an abhorrence of them in the minds of

* Locke's MS. Rushworth's Collections, part III. vol. II. or vol. V. p. 685. Whitelocke's Memorials, p. 90, 91.

† Whitelocke, p. 91.

‡ Idem p. 96.

§ Idem p. 102.

|| Lord Goring, in the time of the interregnum, having gained his pardon, but lost his estate, retired to the little court of Charles II. To which his manners, when he rose to the height of frolic and debauchery, were perfectly adapted. In the 20th year of Charles I. he was created earl of Norwich. He died suddenly 1663, some say 1662. Granger's Biographical History vol. II. p. 236, 237.

the people of Taunton, for several generations. The firmness and conduct, with which colonel Blake supported the siege, lengthened its duration. At the opening of the siege colonel Edmund Wyndham, then governor of Bridgwater, and the commander of a royal regiment, sent a threatening summons to colonel Blake, requiring him, "upon pain of fire and sword," to surrender the town and castle; and persuading him to it from the "indefensibleness of the place, and to prevent the effusion of more christian blood." To which demand Blake returned this spirited answer.

"These are to let you know, that as we neither fear your menaces, nor accept your proffers, so we wish you for time to come to desist from all overtures of the like nature unto us, who are resolved to the last drop of our blood to maintain the quarrel we have undertaken; and doubt not but the same God, who hath hitherto protected us, will ere long bless us with an issue answerable to the justness of our cause; howsoever, to him alone shall we stand or fall*."

The resolution of the governor, and the fortitude of the inhabitants, were put to a full trial by the extremities to which a long siege reduced them. For, though soon after the above determination was formed, a strong party of the parliament forces brake through the besiegers, and supplied the town with stores of provision, and what they most wanted†; yet, before the siege was raised, their ammunition was spent, the country round depopulated, and their provisions so exhausted, that, as tradition reports, there was but one hog left in the town; which half-starved animal was whipt round the walls, and made to cry, in different places, to deceive the besiegers into a belief, that fresh supplies had been thrown in. The fidelity with which the town adhered to the cause it espoused, and the calamities which its perseverance drew on it, led Larry, a French writer, to call Taunton "the Saguntum of the parliament," in allusion to Saguntum, in Spain. But the distresses of the former had a more happy termina-

* Whitelocke's Memorials, p. 116. and Locke's MS.

† Ut ante.

tion than those of the latter; which Hannibal took and demolished, but Taunton was effectually relieved*.

At the time Taunton was besieged by the king's forces, the army of the parliament had been new modelled, and Sir Thomas Fairfax, eldest son of lord Fairfax, of Denton, in the county of York, had been called from the north, which had been the scene of his splendid, military exertions, to take the command in the south and west. This gentleman had been formed as a foldier under Horatio, lord Vere, in the Netherlands, and was at the taking of Bois-le-Duc from the Spaniards. Sir Horace Vere, his master in the art of war, was remarkable for doing great things with few men; and Fairfax with the loss of few. He was one of the first characters of his times for integrity and military accomplishments†.

When the army, which Sir Thomas Fairfax was to lead, was formed and fitted for the field, he was commanded to advance into the west with the forces for the relief of Taunton, 8000 horse and foot; and care was taken to furnish them with money and provisions; 2000*l.* being voted for this purpose. It had been debated, whether Sir Thomas Fairfax should march with his new raised army to Oxford or the west. Oxford was the king's head quarters and garrison; and there all his ordnance and artillery were lodged. That it was also a midland garrison in the heart of the kingdom, and, being the constant seat of war, from the beginning, the county had suffered longer than any other place in the kingdom, were powerful arguments for a direction of all the forces of the parliament to that place: but the great distresses that Taunton suffered from a close siege and the importance of that town, as the asylum of the best affected to the parliament cause determined in favour of the western expedition§.

While Sir Thomas Fairfax was on his march to the west, the king, availing himself of this destination of the parliament's forces, drew his artillery out of Oxford to embody himself in the field. And, at

* Locke's MS. and Oldmixon's History of the Stuarts, p. 278.

† Grainger's Biographical History, vol. II. p. 250, 251.

‡ Whitelocke's Memorials, p. 138, 139.

§ Sprigge's England's Recovery, p. 13, 14.

the same time, the princes Rupert and Maurice, at the request of the king, marched with all their forces to Oxford, to aid his majesty's plan of operation. On these accounts, it was judged necessary to recall his excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax from the service of the west, and to assign only a part of his army to the relief of Taunton. When he had reached Blandford, he received two expresses, to this purpose, from the committee of both kingdoms.

Accordingly a brigade only was sent on to Taunton, while the rest of the army was directed to march back to join lieutenant-general Cromwell and major-general Brown, then near Oxford, and to attend the king's motions with their united forces. The brigade, destined for the relief of Taunton, consisted of four regiments of foot, viz. colonel Welden's, colonel Fortescue's, colonel Floyd's, and colonel Ingolsby's, under the conduct of colonel Welden, as eldest colonel. These were joined, at Dorchester, by six companies of foot, belonging to the garrison of Chichester: and, after that, by as many colours from Lyme. These forces amounted, in the whole, to 4 or 5000 foot; besides a body of 1800, or 2000 horse; consisting of the regiments of the colonels Graves, Cook, and Fitz-james, and the Plymouth regiment.

All which horse and foot, animated with the same resolution against the royal party, and combined in mutual affection to each other, proceeded without any delay or halting, till they came within a few days march of Taunton*.

When (as Sprigge relates the particulars of this expedition) they were come within ten miles of the town, having the advantage of the hills, they discharged ten pieces of their artillery: which peal, according to the information they had previously given by their spies, was a signal to notify, that they were advanced within that number of miles. But they were defeated in this intention: for, some few days before, the royal forces had divided themselves into two parties, each consisting of horse and foot, with some pieces of cannon. These skirmished with each other, with powder only, in the sight of the

* Sprigge's *England's Recovery*, p. 17. Rushworth's *Collections*, vol. VI. p. 29, or part II. vol. I. p. 29.

town:

town: to make the town believe (as they gave out) that the forces of the parliament, coming to their relief, were there encountered and defeated. This was a manœuvre to draw a party out of the town to the succour of their friends, which they might cut off by an ambuscade. The insidious scheme proved unsuccessful. The besieged kept close to their works: and the royal forces, disappointed in the effect of their mock-chace, returned to storm the town, firing it with grenadoes and mortar pieces, by which two long streets of fair buildings were burnt to the ground: but, though they entered the line, they were driven back by the valiant resistance of colonel Blake, who gave them such showers of lead, as filled the trenches with their dead bodies. About four o'clock in the afternoon of the 11th of May, which was Sunday, the royal army having drawn off their guns, and the rear of it being on the march, a party of horse was sent, which advanced to the very works. The town, being now assured of the approach of their friends to their relief, sallied out, and fell upon the rear of the king's forces; of whom they killed some, and took others prisoners.

At the very time, when affairs were taking a turn so favourable to the relief of the town, an amiable and respectable man, Mr. Thomas Welman*, vicar of Luppit, near Honiton, who had fled to Taunton for security from the rage and cruelty of Goring's forces, and whose prayers

* This gentleman was born at Ilchester, 1606; and educated at Oxford, where he spent seven years. He was episcopally ordained; and was, for a considerable time, a curate to Mr. Eedes, of Honiton: where he was greatly beloved, for his useful labours and amiable conversation. There he married the daughter of Mr. Isaac Northcote of that town, a pious woman, who was his wife almost fifty years, and survived him about twelve. The vicarage of Luppit was bestowed on him by ——— Southcot, esq; a gentleman of the parish. When the county was free from the ravages of the royal army, he returned, and though he had offers of better preferment, continued to labour there, till he was ejected by the iniquitous act of uniformity in 1662. He had, at that time, seven children and no large estate to maintain them: but he professed, that if he had nothing to leave them, he would rather commit them to the care of the divine providence than act against the conviction of his own mind. There were many weeping eyes, when he preached his farewell sermon. He died in 1685, aged 80. After he was ejected, he continued to preach as opportunity offered, in his house; and in difficult times, either in the morning before day, or some hours after night. Informers and officers, allured by sums of money, often endeavoured to apprehend him, but were disappointed. Many scholars, designed for the ministry, were indebted

prayers and sermons had greatly encouraged the people, under all the difficulties and dangers of the siege, to trust in God, was preaching, in St. James' church, on Mal. iii. 6. The doctrine, on which he principally insisted, was, that "God's immutability is the ground of the stability of his church and people." Before the sermon was ended, some ran into the church, crying out, *deliverance!* The audience, at the sound of this unexpected good news, were running out of the church; but the preacher prevailed with them to tarry and join, with him, in returning thanks to Almighty God for so great a mercy.

Lord Goring's troops ran away in confusion, leaving many arms behind, and retreated to Pitminster, where they took up their quarters in the fields; but they cut off the pursuit of the parliament army, by blocking up the way with trees.

On Monday morning colonel Welden, with the officers, entered Taunton, without opposition: "where they found a sad spectacle of a flourishing town, almost ruined by fire, and the extremities of war, and the people nigh famished for want of food." When he had spent some time with colonel Blake, he gave orders for the whole brigade to retreat back, and take up their quarters at Chard.

East-street suffered more from fire, during the siege, than any other part of the town, having been several times stormed and entered by the enemy. In the last storm, one Bawdon, a parliament officer, having his thumb cut or shot off, as he was driving the cavaliers before him out of that part of the town, protested, the *rogues should not carry it away with them*: and while he was searching for it, one of those rogues, who remained drinking in an ale-house, shot him dead out of a window; which was the greatest loss the besieged sustained in that action*.

indebted to him for his encouragement, direction, and friendly services: and among others his cousin-german, Dr. Simon Welman, a noted physician, but who was educated for the pulpit. The heavenly and spiritual frame of his mind diffused such an unction through his discourses, that it was said "He spoke rather like an angel than a man." His singular humility, modesty, and mild temper, made him, when he heard of his people's miscarriages, prefer convincing them of their faults, rather by letters, than by a reproof to their face. He lived, and died, a non-conformist, with a great deal of comfort, though he did not leave his family rich. Palmer's Non-conformist's Memorial, vol. I. p. 378—380.

* Oldmixon's History of the Stuarts, p. 279.

It greatly facilitated the raising of the siege of Taunton, that the king's army had no other information, but that the whole force of general Fairfax was on the march towards them; whereas it was only a brigade. This mistake was lamented by colonel John Digby, and urged by him in excuse for retreating from the town. Had they known this, they would probably have stood their ground: for they had, in their own opinion, before the town, double the strength sufficient to have fought the parliament forces, and also to have made good the siege. Their apprehensions concerning the greatness of the army advancing against them were not without foundation; for Fairfax did actually march with the whole army from Blandford towards Dorchester, as if he designed to lead all his troops to the relief of Taunton, but then he suddenly wheeled about eastward with the main body, and dismissed, as we have said, only a brigade to the west.

It is surprising, when we reflect on the distresses to which the town was reduced, that, from the beginning to the raising of the siege, it lost only 200 men. Two hundred of the royal army were made prisoners, and 260 arms were taken. In the advance of Fairfax's brigade to the town, 10 of it fell upon 100 of the king's, and killed and took some of them.

On receiving the news of Taunton's being relieved, the commons appointed a day of public thanksgiving for the same: letters of thanks were sent to Sir Thomas Fairfax, for sending relief to it, and recommending to him, colonel Welden, for his good services: and to the governor, to the inhabitants of the town, and to the soldiers in it, for their spirited and gallant exertions in defending it through a siege of 54 days. An order was also issued for bestowing, on the garrison, for its valiant and faithful defence, 2000*l.* and to colonel Blake, in particular, a grant of 500*l.* was made*.

The natives, for many years, retained, and cherished, a lively and devout sense of their deliverance; and of the wonders that distinguished it: "wonders," it was said, "that might even fill a volume, and

* The preceding particulars are related in Whitelocke's Memorials, p. 140, and 141; Sprigge's England's Recovery, p. 17, 18; and Rushworth's Collections, vol. VI. p. 29, or part IV. vol. I. p. 29: and some of them are given in Mr. Locke's MS.

"give

"give life to a story that should outlive the world." The 11th of May was celebrated for some time by acts of public devotion and anniversary sermons; and the mercies of it conveyed down in historical song*: and, within the memory of men, it has been observed with joy.

Ere the gladness and triumph of the people, in this deliverance, could subside, or they could recover from the distresses of the siege, they were again attacked, and reduced to new extremities. Before the end of May, the king's forces under Goring, Hopton, Berkley, and Greenville, about 10,000 in all, joined together; engaged with colonel Welden's

* Three of these sermons are in print: one entitled, "Man's Wrath and God's praise," on Ps. lxxvi. 10. by George Newton, A. M. 1646. The second, "The Waters of Marah sweetned," by T. B. A. M. and minister of the gospel in the county, 1647. The third, "The Works of Heaven upon Earth: or the Excellence of Praise and Thanksgiving," in part displayed," by Henry Jeans, minister of God's word, at Chedzoy, 1648. The circumstances of the siege, and of the deliverance, being then recent in the memory of the people, these discourses contain no narrative of either. Each of them is dedicated to the mayor, of the year, as well as to the inhabitants. The following is the most exact copy of the song, which we have been able to procure.

The eleventh of May was a joyful day,
When Taunton got relief;
Which turn'd our sorrows into joy,
And eas'd us of our grief.

The Taunton men were valiant then,
In keeping of the town,
While many of those, who were our foes,
Lay gasping on the ground.

When colonel Massey, of the same,
Did understand aright;
He, like a man of courage bold,
Prepared himself to fight.

With that our soldiers, one and all,
Cast up their caps, and cry'd,
What need we fear what man can do,
Since God is on our side.

Long time did Goring lie encamp'd
Against fair Taunton town;
He made a vow to starve us out,
And batter our castle down.

Within our castle did remain
(A garrison so strong)

Those likely lads which did unto
Our parliament belong.

Before day-light appear'd in view,
The news to them was come;
That Goring, and his curst crew,
Were all dispers'd and gone.

But who can tell what joy was there,
And what content of mind
Was put into the hearts of those,
Who'd been so long confin'd.

Our bread was fourteen-pence per pound,
And all things sold full dear,
Which made our soldiers make short meals
And pinch themselves full near.

Our beer was eighteen-pence per quart,
(As for a truth was told)
And butter eighteen-pence per pound,
To christians there was sold.

The cavaliers dispers'd with fear,
And forced were to run,
On the eleventh of May, by break of day,
Ere rising of the sun.

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brigade;

brigade; and overpowering them with numbers, obliged them to retreat into the town, which thus was again closely besieged: and Goring continued to lie, with his army, about it, with the sanguine hope of subduing the parliament forces there, and of settling the west of England in an absolute posture for the king's service. Governor Blake, in several sallies, gained the advantage over the royal general (colonel Ingolsby, in particular, fell upon the royal quarters, and slew divers considerable men): yet he found himself beset with difficulties; and was obliged to write to the parliament, in the most pressing terms, for immediate assistance. His letters represented; "That if relief came not speedily to them, they should be put unto great straits for provisions and ammunition: they assured the house, they never accepted a parley from the enemy; but scorned it: and they had some ammunition left, and were resolved to feed upon their horses: they requested the house to take consideration of their condition: and left all to God, who, they doubted not, but would relieve them." The parliament returned for answer, that relief should speedily come to them, and what money they took up the house would pay; and desired them to go on in their vigi- lancy and valour, and they should never want the encouragement of the parliament."

The situation of Taunton accordingly met with attention and support. An ordinance was sent to the lords to raise a regiment of dragoons for its relief. Divers officers, left out of the new army, offered to enlist themselves for the same purpose: and the house directed, that such as should enlist themselves, should have a fifth part of their arrears paid them within a month after their advance; and those who did not perform their proposal, should forfeit all their arrears*.

The town was encouraged by the information they received of the aid the parliament was about to afford them, and by a small supply of powder from Lyme. A party of the garrison issued out on the besiegers, and took and slew above 400 of them, with the loss of 100. The royal forces, in consequence of this, drew back; and the quarters were enlarged five or six miles in compass.

* Whitelocke's Memorials, p. 144—146.

Besides the assistance which the parliament afforded, the common-council, and others, of London, entered into an association for the relief of Taunton; and, by voluntary subscriptions, collected 4000*l.* for raising 1000 horse to join colonel Mafsey, who had been sent by the order of the commons into the west*.

But what most effectually contributed to the relief of the town, and raising the siege, was, the intercepting of a packet from lord Goring to the king, discovering the state of things in the west, and giving the king hopes of his being able soon to march to his assistance at Leicester, with a considerable army, and urging him, in the mean time, to stand only upon a defensive posture. The person, to whom the dispatch was entrusted, carried the letters to Sir Thomas Fairfax, and delivered them to him the day after his complete victory over the royal army at Naseby: the disastrous fate of which battle the king would probably have avoided, by declining to fight, had the packet been faithfully presented to him. The intelligence derived from the letters quickened Sir Thomas Fairfax to relieve Taunton with speed.

Having besieged and taken Leicester, and settled affairs there, after its surrender, which engaged him only for four days, the general marched to Warwick, doubtful, whether to follow the king and prevent his raising a new army in Wales; or to proceed to the assistance of the parliament army in the west: where, according to common report, the king's forces were 12,000; and general Mafsey, who was sent to the relief of Taunton, had only 3000. This superiority of numbers, it was rightly judged, would enable Goring, both to keep off Mafsey, and to keep up the parliament forces in the town: and threatened a blow, which would prove ruinous to their cause. For success there would give the king's army the entire possession of all the west, except the garrisons of Lyme, Pool, and Weymouth. The consequences to be apprehended, on account of the trade and riches of those counties, and of the considerable towns and ports on each side, either towards France or Ireland, were powerful inducements with the general to pursue his march thither. But, in a business of such moment, being cautious of acting on his own judgment

* Whitelocke's Memorials, p. 144, 145.

only,

- only, he sent expresses to the parliament, and the committee of both kingdoms, and submitted his motions to their advice and counsel.

Yet, that no time might be lost, he proceeded on his march, as far as Marlborough, which he reached, on Saturday, the 28th of June : and, while he rested there, on the next day, having received the consent of the house, and of the committee of both kingdoms, to march westward, he sent forward spies to Taunton, to give notice of the army's advance for their relief.

He accordingly bent his course that way, and arrived at Blandford on the 2d of July ; where he joined with colonel Massey, and intelligence met him, that the spies had got into Taunton, and communicated the welcome news of his advance ; and that Goring had drawn off to Black-down, and burnt his huts.

On the next night, at Dorchester, a confirmation of this intelligence was received ; and it was added, that the intention of Goring's drawing off his men to Black-down, it was discovered, was to invite the forces in the town to fall out, that he might take advantage to surprise them : but, failing in his expectation, he had returned again to his former quarters about Taunton : and had made some slight and ineffectual attempts on the parliament party there. Sir Thomas Fairfax's foot, hearing that Goring was fallen on again, were eager to march all that night, after 12 miles march in the day, which was also but the moiety of 62 miles march in five days before : so far, says my author, did their compassion to Taunton, and our party there, carry them beyond consideration of themselves.

On the 4th of July the army proceeded from Dorchester to Beaminster. Here positive intelligence was received, at night, that Goring had quite drawn off the siege from Taunton, and was come to Ilminster ; and that, on that night, his quarters would be at Somerton. The general, upon this, sent a party of horse to Crewkerne, who took some of Goring's soldiers prisoners, whose testimony confirmed the news of the siege being raised, and added, that their army was marched towards Langport. Thus was Taunton, a second time, relieved ; and the parliament interest there rescued from the imminent danger of an entire overthrow. The town had, on the 3d
of

of July, when it was delivered, stood a five weeks siege. One thousand of the royal forces were slain; and 400 taken prisoners, with 400 arms. The parliament lost, among other officers, colonel Floyd and colonel Richbell; both of them faithful, experienced soldiers. Many officers, and persons of quality, in the royal army, fell; and particularly Sir John Digby, brother to Sir Kenelm Digby, received, in this siege, a wound, of which he afterwards died. The valour, diligence, and fidelity of colonel Welden and the rest of the commanders who engaged in the defence of Taunton, gained great encomiums; as did also the good services of the horse commanded by colonel Graves, who, in several sallies upon the royal army, were very successful*.

The zeal and steadiness, with which the town of Taunton, including the corporation, as well as the inhabitants, supported the cause of the parliament against the despotic views and arbitrary measures of Charles I. were remembered against them, when his son Charles II. was established on the throne of his ancestors: and full revenge was taken for the disloyalty and injuries, with which he conceived his royal father had been treated. In the year 1662, commissioners were appointed, and named for each county, city, and borough, for securing the peace of the kingdom, and regulating corporations. Orders were issued out by them for displacing the officers, and demolishing the walls of the cities and towns, which had bulwarks and garrisons, and had maintained them, through the war, against the king. Such places were looked upon as having been the seats of rebellion; and it was determined, by their destruction, to give security and an example to future times. The county troops and respective trained bands, to prevent tumults and insurrections, were employed as guards, at the demolition of their fortifications. Taunton felt the effects of these measures. Its corporation were deprived of their charter; and its walls so entirely erased to the foundation, that its present inhabitants cannot tell where they stood†.

* Sprigge's England's Recovery, p. 47, 48, 53—56 and 60.

† Locke's MS. and Heath's Chronicle, p. 512. Some workmen, Mr. Locke says, lately digging for bricks, met with the mote, and, following its direction, found it to be 12 feet deep from the level of the ground, about 16 feet wide at top, and four at bottom.

This

This step by no means tended to conciliate the affections of the town to the new government: though, at the instance of Dr. Peter Mew, bishop of Winchester, the charter, as we have before related, was restored. Every thing, during the reign of Charles II. contributed to alarm the friends of the protestant religion, and of the constitution, with fears of the return and full establishment of popery and despotism*. When the duke of York ascended the throne, his conduct soon shewed what expectations were to be entertained, concerning his views and principles. On the next Sunday, after the death of his brother, he went openly to mass. His queen, her father confessor, and other ambitious catholics, insinuated to him, that a standing army, and advancing the Roman catholics to civil and military employments, were the only means of establishing his authority: for the fanatics and presbyterians were able to disturb him: and the loyalty of the episcopal party, only the effect of animosity to the dissenters, was to be suspected. He easily adopted the project that was suggested to him; and he began to closet men, and, by fair words and ample promises, endeavoured to allure them to assist his intentions. His zeal to introduce and establish popery was so well known, that pope Innocent IX. in a letter to him, while he applauded it, expressed his apprehensions, lest he should push it too far†.

By these projects and their recent sufferings, under Charles II. the minds of the people were disposed to favour any efforts that promised the secure enjoyments of their liberties. They looked up to a prince even of royal blood, as their future deliverer.

This was James duke of Monmouth, who passed as the natural son of Charles II. when prince of Wales, by Mrs. Lucy Walter, sometimes called Mrs. Barlow, daughter of Richard Walter, of Haverford-west, in the county of Pembroke. It was suspected that the prince was married to this lady‡. It is certain, that he ever expressed
a par-

* A report prevailed, that the king had been heard to say, "That he would make the name of parliaments to be forgotten in England." *The Secret History of the Reigns of Charles II. and James II.* p. 117.

† *The History of William III.* vol. I. p. 173, 174.

‡ In a novel, dedicated to William lord Russel, entitled, "The Perplexed Prince," which pretended to give the secret history of Charles II. and Lucy Walter, it was asserted; that

a particular kindness and deference to her. He had suffered his servants to wait on her, at table, kneeling, and to pay all the marks of respect due only to a queen: and her son, the duke of Monmouth, was distinguished, above all his other natural sons, by great titles, high employments, and every expression of favour and affection. When, by the influence of the duke of York, he was obliged to retire into Holland, his royal father followed him with proofs of the love which, though often dissembled, he always bore him. He furnished him with money, sent him kind messages, wrote to him with his own hand, formed the scheme of recalling him to court*: and nothing pleased the king more than the noble reception afforded him by a *prince of his* blood, in a foreign country. During his absence, the king could not bear any reflexions to be cast on him; and some officious courtiers found, to their cost, that to aggravate Monmouth's crimes was not the way to advance their own influence and fortune. These things gave the minds of many a strong impression in favour of the legitimacy of his birth. In the year 1675, it was judged necessary to guard against the consequences of this belief, by parliamentary provisions. For, in a bill for the preservation of his majesty's person and government, committed to a committee to be prepared, instructions were given to insert a clause, declaring it high treason for any person to assert the legitimacy of James duke of Monmouth, or his title or pretence to the crown. This bill was read twice, and committed to a committee of the whole house: the committee was to prepare a clause, that none should move, in either house of parliament, for the alteration of the succession of the crown in the right

that the king was certainly married to her. This book, though a mean performance, had a great influence upon the populace. Granger's Biographical History of England, vol. III. 8vo. p. 194, 195.

* Welwood's Memoirs, p. 164, and Appendix XIV. and History of William III. vol. I. 158. This the duke of Monmouth himself takes notice of in his journal, of January the 5th; he says, "I received a letter from L——, marked by 29, (*i. e.* the king) that, in February, I "should certainly have leave to return." February the 3d, "I had a letter from L——, "that my business was almost done, but must be so sudden, as not to leave room for 39 " (*i. e.* the duke of York's) party to counterplot." Dr. Welwood, indeed, resolves all the measures, here alluded to, for recalling the duke of Monmouth, into a design, not of altering the succession, but of weakening the duke of York's party, by placing that of Monmouth against it.

“ the hazard of being thought any thing, rather than a rash, inconsiderate man. And, to tell you my thoughts, without disguise, I am now so much in love with a retired life, that I am never like to be fond of *making a bustle in the world again**.”

But, notwithstanding he had formed this turn of mind, and had such sentiments concerning the undertaking, the importunities and ardour of those, who were about him, prevailed with him to act contrary to his own sense and reason. He had been obliged, soon after he had withdrawn to Brussels, to leave that place, at the requisition of the governor of the Netherlands, who had been requested by king James to command the duke to depart from the Spanish dominions†. Upon receiving this notice he privately returned to Holland. Here he made such preparations, as his situation, and the precipitancy with which the design was conducted, allowed: as no money was sent him from England, the duke pawned his jewels to purchase arms and freight his vessels, which amounted only to three ships: one of 32 guns, which carried most of the men, and two others destined to convey their ammunition. The whole company consisted but of 82 persons.

On the 24th of May, 1685, (O. S.) they left Amsterdam about two of the clock, being Sunday morning, in a lighter, and sailed for the Texel; whither their vessels had been sent before: but, the winds proving adverse, they did not arrive there till Saturday, when they all went aboard. Here the man of war, of 32 guns, on board of which was the duke, was arrested by the order of the States of Amsterdam, at the requisition of the English envoy; but they broke through the arrest, and, on Sunday morning, at break of day, set sail for England. For most part of the time they were at sea, the winds proved cross, so that their passage from Amsterdam to Lyme wanted but two days of three weeks. The duke and his company landed, at Lyme, on Thursday the 11th of June, not only without any opposition, but with every expression of joy. As soon as he came ashore, he called for silence, and invited them to join in return-

* Welwood's Memoirs, p. 378, or Appendix, No. 15.

† The History of William III. vol. I. p. 160.

ing God thanks for their preservation at sea. They fell on their knees, and he offered their devout acknowledgments in a short ejaculation. They then, well armed, entered the town. Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday morning were spent in enlisting men; who, in numbers, flocked to his standard. On Saturday night, about ten o'clock, 300 men were sent to Bridport, to storm that town early the next morning. They did this, and took many prisoners; but, being attacked by some of the king's forces, who were lying about a wood, they were forced to retreat, three or four being killed on each side, and eight of the royal party being taken.

More effectually to draw the people over to his interest, the duke of Monmouth put out a manifesto; entitled, "The declaration of James duke of Monmouth, and the noblemen, gentlemen, and others, now in arms, for the defence and vindication of the protestant religion, and the laws, rights, and privileges of England."

The preamble of this proclamation set forth, that the end of government was the happiness and security of the governed: that the English constitution was so wisely and happily formed, as to entrust the prince with all the power necessary for the welfare of the people or his own protection; and yet so to limit and restrain him, that he could not, without the violation of his oath, and the rules of government, do any hurt: that, according to the primitive frame of the constitution, the rights reserved to the people contributed to the honour and greatness of the king, and his prerogatives to their protection and safety: that, as all human things were subject to perversion, as well as decay, so the English government had often been wrested from its first institution: and that it had been very recently broken, and nothing left unattempted for converting a limited monarchy into an absolute tyranny.

It then taxed the whole course of the life of the duke of York with being a continued conspiracy against the reformed religion, and the rights of the nation. It particularly charged him with the burning of London, instigating a confederacy with France, and a war with Holland, and fomenting the popish plot. It imputed to him the murder of Sir Edmundbury Godfrey, and the assassination of the earl of Essex. It accused him of having, after he had ascended the throne, made an

open

open profession of popery, and invited, into the kingdom, multitudes of priests and jesuits ; of trampling upon the laws concerning property, in two proclamations, requiring the collection of the customs, and continuing an excise which was to have expired with the late king's death ; of suborning the judges ; of advancing to the bench those whom parliament had branded for perverting the laws ; of packing juries ; of framing illegal charters ; and of advising and procuring the prorogation and dissolution of parliament, in order to prevent, while he was duke of York, an enquiry into his crimes.

It therefore proclaimed war against him, as a murderer, and an assassinator of innocent men, a traitor to the nation, and a tyrant over the people.

While it arraigned the conduct and government of the king, in strong and severe terms, it held forth the views and designs of the duke of Monmouth ; who in the most solemn manner, pledged himself to restore and preserve the balance and temperament of the constitution ; to establish and secure the protestant religion ; not to destroy, or make war with any, even the papists, for their religion ; to maintain the rights of parliament ; to hold annual parliaments, without any dissolution, or prorogation, within the year ; to debar ignorant, scandalous, and mercenary men from the administration of justice ; and to renew to the judges the ancient tenure of their places, that they should hold them *quamdiu se bene gesserint* : to restore to boroughs and cities their old charters ; to repeal the corporation and militia acts ; to reverse all sentences founded on any of the penal statutes against protestant dissenters ; to prosecute the duke of York, till he was brought to suffer the punishment due to the murder of the late king by poison, with which the declaration charged him : and to consent to, and promote, the passing such laws, as might, for the future, put it out of the power of any person, on the throne, to deprive the subjects of their rights : while he would leave his own title to the crown to be decided by the wisdom, justice, and authority, of a parliament, legally chosen, and acting with freedom.

It further declared an approbation of the conduct of the nobility, gentry, and commons, in Scotland ; who, on the like motives, had then taken up arms : and it required and enjoined all sincere protestants

tants and true Englishmen to afford their utmost aid and succour for dethroning the tyrant James duke of York : concluding, “ Now let “ us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God, and “ the Lord do that which seemeth good unto him*.”

By the order of the parliament, then devoted to the king, this declaration was burnt by the common hangman, which served only to make people more eager to read it : the court, fearful what impressions it would make in favour of the duke’s design, published a proclamation, whereby it was made treason to spread the said declaration. An act was passed attainting the duke of Monmouth of high treason ; and a proclamation was issued out, promising a reward of 5000*l.* to any one who should secure him, dead or alive†. The duke of Albemarle, as lord-lieutenant of Devonshire, was sent down to raise the militia, and to lead them against him. This was a service, from which they were averse ; many deserted from it, and all were cold in it. The obliging and gentle manners of the duke of Monmouth won the hearts of the people ; and the whole country was open to him for almost a fortnight.

On the Monday, after he landed at Lyme, he marched to Axminster : and, by this time, his forces amounted to 2000 foot and 300 horse. After a march of about two miles, they discovered the duke of Albemarle, with his army, consisting of 4000 men ; designing to quarter that night in the same town. He had conducted his forces from Exeter, with an intention to lay a siege against Lyme. The duke of Monmouth, on finding that he was so near, endeavoured to attach him to his interest, and writ him a letter signed *James Rex* : to which the duke of Albemarle replied : “ That he never had been a “ rebel, nor ever would be one‡.” This answer cut off all hopes of an union ; and the duke of Monmouth advanced to the town in good order, lined the hedges, and planted his field-pieces, expecting nothing less than a battle. But the duke of Albemarle, when he was even within a quarter of a mile of Axminster, reflecting that he was at the

* Western Martyrology, p. 154—162. Ed. in 1705..

† The History of William III. vol. I. p. 162..

‡ Idem.

head of a militia only, who were not disposed to fight against Monmouth, retreated; and, his men supposing that they were pursued, the retreat was not effected without much confusion and disorder. Had Monmouth followed them, he might have taken all their arms, increased his own forces, and have marched, without opposition, to the gates of Exeter. But when it was debated, whether to pursue them or not, the duke, cautious of risking the event of a battle, in so early a stage, distrusting the skill of forces scarcely disciplined, and solicitous to make up into the country as fast as possible, with the sanguine hope of a growing support, determined against the measure, and proceeded to Taunton: the country all the way filling the air with their acclamations, praying God to succeed his arms: and, on his march, he is said to have touched several for the king's evil*.

On Thursday, June the 18th, he entered Taunton: where he was received with unusual demonstrations of joy. The streets were thronged with people, eager to manifest the gladness, with which his arrival filled them: and their houses and doors were garnished with boughs and flowers. On the next day, 26 young ladies presented him with colours, made at the expence of the townsmen. The captain of them went before, with a naked sword, in one hand, and a small curious bible, in the other; which she also delivered to the duke, making a short speech. The duke received these emblematical expressions of the attachment of the town, and of their expectations from him, with great pleasure; and assured her, that "he came, now, into the field, with a design to defend the truths contained therein, and to seal it with his blood, if there should be any occasion for it†."

He was now, by the dint of importunity, prevailed on to take a step, from which he was very averse: that was to assume the title of king. And he was inflexible, till, besides its being urged that it was necessary to draw over the gentry, who yet had not moved in his favour, because they conceived that he came to set up a common-wealth;—he was told, that it was the only thing, in case of the failure of his attempt, to provide against the ruin of his adherents: who, if he

* Granger's Biographical History, vol. IV. p. 267.

† Western Martyrology, 5th edit. p. 251, 252.

declared

clared himself king, might be sheltered by the statute made in the reign of Henry VII. in favour of those that should obey a king *de facto*. Different views, it is judged, governed those who advised him. Some thought, by it, to make the breach between king James and him irreconcilable; and, by placing one against the other, to pave the way for a common-wealth. Others were undoubtedly actuated by unfeigned zeal for his honour, and a persuasion that he was the lawful heir to the crown*.

It being the general cry of the army, and the country, he reluctantly yielded to it: and, on Saturday morning, was proclaimed king. This was followed, in the afternoon, by three other proclamations: one, setting a sum of money on king James' head: the second, declaring the parliament of England a *sedition assembly*: and the third, declaring the duke of Albemarle (who had rallied his men and lay within six miles of Taunton) a traitor, if he laid not down his arms. The duke of Monmouth staid at Taunton, till Sunday morning, and then marched for Bridgwater: he was here, also, cordially received; but did little more than stay till the proclamation was published and the declaration was read, as it had been in other towns, the magistrates standing by in their gowns. By this time he had between 4 and 5000 men, and, had he not wanted arms, could have made 10,000.

From Bridgwater he proceeded to Glastonbury, with an intention to march to Bristol, and attack it: this design was pursued, till he reached Keynsham-bridge, a few miles from Bristol. Here he was alarmed by the approach of a party of the royal forces, with which some of his men had a small skirmish; of whom above 20 were killed or wounded: whereas none of the king's party were slain, and only four, with their horses, taken: and lord Newburg received, it was supposed, a mortal wound. This skirmish arose, on one side, by the royal army approaching near to the duke's, mistaking them for their own forces; and, on the other side, by the eagerness of undisciplined men, too impetuous to wait till the enemy entered the town, when they might have taken them all prisoners. The duke was now strongly urged by his adherents, especially those who were natives of

* Welwood's Memoirs, 1700, p. 167, 168.

Bristol, and knew the dispositions of the inhabitants; to proceed to that city. But, the duke of Beaufort being there, with a garrison of about 4000 men, and the royal forces being, as it appeared, so near, he could not be persuaded to pursue this measure. This, eventually, proved fatal to his cause: for, had he possessed himself of Bristol, into which he was offered to be conducted, by some private ways, with the assurance, that no resistance would be made by the people, he would not have wanted either money or arms; and, with such resources as that town would have furnished, it would not have been difficult for him to have marched to London; the king not being able to make 7000 men. "But God," says my author, "saw it not fit for us, and overruled our consultations, to our own ruin." And this, at the height of their prosperity.

The scheme of attacking Bristol being relinquished, they marched to Bath, to lie before it, in the afternoon, and sent a trumpeter to demand the town. But, the garrison being strong, and the people warmly attached to the royal interest, entrance was refused. Unwilling to exhaust his strength, and spend his time in sieges, the duke advanced towards Frome. On his march, he was alarmed, near Philip's-Norton, with a sudden appearance of a part of the king's army, who had entered the town, and lined the hedges. They fired on his men, and a brisk skirmish ensued. At last, they were beaten with the loss of about 30 slain in the place; whereas the duke lost but 10 in all, and a few were wounded. The royal army retreating within a mile of the town, the duke followed, and pitched about a musket-shot from it. They played their cannon one on another for some hours: and the duke's forces, all the while, lost but one man; but having the advantage of the ground, did great execution. The king's forces, at last, retreated; some hundreds of men, it was said, being killed and wounded.

After this rencontre, the duke proceeded to Frome, where, though the people were strongly attached to his cause, disasters multiplied against him. A few days before his arrival, the arms in the place had been taken from it, by stratagem. Here he received the discouraging intelligence of the defeat of the duke of Argyle, who made an
attack

attack in Scotland; and of the advance of the king's forces from London, with considerable baggage and 30 field-pieces. This news, with the want of money and arms, was a damp to his hopes, and threw him into the greatest perplexity. In this anxious uncertainty he determined to return to Bridgwater; which he reached again on Friday the 3d of July: and was received with the ardour of unabated attachment.

Here he resolved to fortify, so as to hold his ground, till he heard from London. But the quickened march of the king's forces precipitated his fate. On Saturday, in the afternoon, information was brought to him, that they had advanced to and encamped within a mile and a half of the town. On Sunday, in the afternoon, the duke of Monmouth, the lord Grey, and the chief officers, went up into the tower of the church, to take a view of them. Their infantry was encamped on Sedge-moor, and their cavalry lay, at some distance, from the army, in Weston. The soldiers were perceived to be in a very remiss and careless posture; and the duke was told that no more was to be done, than to lock up the stable doors, and seize the troopers in their beds. A council of war was held, and it was determined to fall on the king's forces at the dead of night. About eleven, the duke's forces, under the conduct of a guide, Benjamin Newton, marched out, and, about one, fell on the royal tents. There was a ditch between the two armies; and the guide promised to lead the duke's men over an easy, fordable place: but, through their impetuosity to begin the assault, they lost their guide: so that, while they endeavoured to recover the place, the king's forces took the alarm, and got on their legs. A fierce battle followed. The duke's foot fought well, but the horse did not come up, nor would stand at the noise of drums and guns; so that two pieces of ordnance, out of four, were soon lost. Upon which lord Grey, who commanded the horse, rode up to the duke, crying, "All is lost, and it is time for you to shift for yourself." The infantry was headed by the duke himself, who, during the whole action, maintained the reputation of bravery he had gained in the world. His foot flung most of their shot over, so that the royal soldiers were killed most in the rear, and ran while the front stood still. These, at last, were joined by the horse, and were well

disciplined and well armed; whereas the army of the duke was, in both respects, very deficient. His forces having shot away all their ammunition, and their baggage not being in the field, were forced to retreat in confusion, and yield the day. Lord Grey and the duke fled. About 300 of his men, and 400 of the king's, were killed in the action: but many more of the former were lost in the retreat. Many adherents to the duke were taken prisoners; the principal of whom were colonel Holmes, major Perrot, captain Madders, of Crewkerne, Mr. Williams, a domestic of the duke, who had his grace's cloak and 200 guineas, and captain Adlam, who had about 100 broad pieces quilted in his buff coat. The last was so mortally wounded, that he could not have survived it; but the earl of Feversham would not trust to that, so that he commanded him to be executed the next day; and he was the first who was hanged in chains on the moor between Weston and Bridgwater, where there soon was, to a considerable length*, a range of gibbets so decorated.

After the field was cleared of the duke's men, his lordship marched, with 500 foot and a party of horse and dragoons, to Bridgwater, where he found, that the duke's forces, left there, were fled and dispersed. Leaving colonel Kirk in the town with these forces, he sent out divers parties in pursuit of lord Grey and the duke of Monmouth, the latter of whom had made off about 20 miles from the moor, accompanied with about 50 horse. Dr. Oliver, one of the company, afterwards a physician at Greenwich hospital, rode up to the duke, and persuaded him to turn his course to the sea-coast opposite to Wales, seize one of the passage boats, at Uphill, and get over to the other side; that he might escape his enemies, who were waiting for him eastward, and secure a retreat amongst his friends. But the lord Grey overruled this advice, as foolish, and censured the doctor for offering it†.

On

* As soon as the earl of Feversham had gained the victory, he hung 20 of the prisoners, without trial. "His uncle, the famous marshal Turenne," says Mr. Granger, "who knew and practised every part of generalship, never treated his prisoners in this manner." *Biographical History*, vol. IV. p. 271.

† On the duke's going away, the doctor said, with tears in his eyes, "God bless you, sir, I shall never see you more:" and so setting spurs to his horse, he rode off to Bristol, about

On the day after the fight, some of lord Lumley's men seized lord Grey and another person, near Holt-lodge, in Dorsetshire, four miles west of Ringwood. The duke, who had taken the same road, when his horse could carry him no farther, changed cloaths with a shepherd, and went as far as his legs could carry him, attended only by a German, whom he had brought over with him. They were observed, by one Anne Farrant, to go over an hedge, proving to be the out-bounds of many enclosures. Lord Lumley, meeting with this woman, and learning from her, that two men had taken this rout, set guards upon the avenues. On the 8th of July, about five in the morning, the German was discovered and taken, who confessed that he had left the duke about one: the shepherd had been before found in the duke of Monmouth's cloaths. Being thus put on his tract, the search was renewed: and, about eleven o'clock, he was detected, concealed in a field, under some straw and fern, covered with a tattered cloak, with a few pease in his pocket. The fidelity of one of his dogs is said to have facilitated the search after him: for, having lost his master the day of the fight, this fond animal followed him by the scent, and stopt at the place where he had taken shelter. He was taken, and, with lord Grey and the German, was conducted, under a strong guard, to Whitehall: where they arrived on the 13th of July. "His body," says bishop Burnet, "was quite sunk with fatigue: and his mind was so low, that he begged his life in a manner that agreed ill with the former parts of his life. He called for pen, ink, and paper; and wrote to the queen, and to the queen dowager, to intercede with the king for his life*: besides these, he sent to the king the following submissive letter:

"Sir,

"Your majesty may think it is the misfortune I now lie under, makes me make this application to you: but, I do assure your ma-

about 12 miles from the place, and concealed himself with a friend, who knew nothing of his connexion with the duke; till he returned to London in company with judge Jeffries' clerk, to whom his friend, who was a tory, recommended him. Oldmixon's History of the Stuarts, p. 764.

* Burnet's History of his own Times, 8vo. vol. II. p. 329. The History of William III. vol. I. p. 163—165. Western Martyrology, p. 250—256. Granger's Biographical History, vol. IV. p. 267. Oldmixon's History of the Stuarts, p. 704.

"jefty,

“ jesty, it is the remorse I now have in me, of the wrong I have done
 “ you in several things ; and now in taking up arms against you. For
 “ my taking up arms, it never was in my thoughts, since the king died :
 “ the prince and princess of Orange will be witness for me of the assu-
 “ rance I gave them, that I would never stir against you. But my mis-
 “ fortune was such, as to meet with some horrid people, that made me
 “ believe such things of your majesty, and gave me so many false argu-
 “ ments, that I was fully led away to believe, that it was a shame, and
 “ a sin, before God, not to do it. But, sir, I will not trouble your
 “ majesty, at present, with many things I could say for myself, that,
 “ I am sure, would move your compassion. The chief end of this
 “ letter being only to beg of you, that I may have that happiness as to
 “ speak to your majesty ; for I have to say to you, sir, that, I hope, may
 “ give you a long and happy reign. I am sure, sir, when you hear me,
 “ you will be convinced of the zeal I have for your preservation ; and
 “ how heartily I repent of what I have done. I can say no more to
 “ your majesty now, being this letter must be seen by those that keep
 “ me. Therefore, sir, I shall make an end, in begging of your majesty
 “ to believe so well of me, that I would rather die a thousand deaths,
 “ than excuse any thing I have done, if I did not really think myself
 “ the most in the wrong that ever man was ; and had not, from the
 “ bottom of my heart, an abhorrence for those that put me upon it, and
 “ for the action itself. I hope, sir, God Almighty will strike your heart
 “ with mercy and compassion for me, as he has done mine with an ab-
 “ horrence of what I have done. Wherefore, sir, I hope I may live
 “ to shew you how zealous I shall ever be for your service ; and could
 “ I say but one word in this letter, you would be convinced of it ; but
 “ it is of that consequence, that I dare not do it. Therefore, sir, I do
 “ beg of you once more to let me speak to you ; for then you would be
 “ convinced, how much I shall ever be

“ *Your majesty's most humble and dutiful*

“ MONMOUTH*.”

This letter, though drawn up in such submissive strains, would have met with no regard, had it not been for the intercession of the

* History of the Reign of William III. vol. I. p. 166, 167.

queen.

both on his public actions and his course of life; but he did it in a softer and less peremptory manner: and having said what he thought proper on points, where he saw he could not convince him, he turned to others fit to be laid before a dying man.

The duke, with repeated earnestness, solicited the respite of one day: and the king was much censured for denying so small a favour. When he saw that he must die, according to the strict rigour of the sentence, after complaining that his death was hurried on so fast, he shewed a composure of mind that surprized those that saw him: and he went to the place of execution with an air of undisturbed courage. When he saw the axe, he touched it, and said, "it was not sharp enough." He gave the executioner but half the fee he intended; and said, if he cut off his head cleverly, and not so butcherly as he did that of lord Ruffel, his man would give him the rest. A trembling and confusion seized the executioner, that, having given two or three strokes without being able to finish the matter, he flung the axe out of his hand. The sheriff forced him to take it up, and with three or four more strokes he severed the head from the body; and both were presently buried in the chapel of the Tower*.

It was said, that a brave old officer, who came over with him, and afterwards accompanied the prince of Orange, offered, with a small party of horse, to have ventured through the guards, and take him off the scaffold. But they could not be got together†.

The whole behaviour of the duke, through the solemn closing scene of his life, was easy and calm; not without a decent cheerfulness. The purport of his last speech was, that he repented of all his sins; and expressed a great concern for the blood spilt on his account, especially as he feared the fatal consequences of it to the reformed religion; that the fate of the earl of Essex, and the death of his royal father, called for revenge; while the evident attempts to introduce popery and arbitrary power protected his cause, and screened it from the charge of faction and rebellion; that he rather pitied the state into which the covetousness and falshood of some had brought themselves.

* Burnet's History of his own Times, vol. II. p. 332.

† Western Martyrology, p. 154.

and him, than he would discover the persons concerned in his overthrow: and that he heartily forgave all who had wronged him, and were instrumental to his fall: and that he hoped, king James would shew himself of his brother's blood, and extend mercy to his children. The following declarations were, in themselves, singular, and made great impressions on the minds of people.

"I have lived," he said, "and shall now die, in the faith of this, that *God will work a deliverance for his people*: and then will be discovered the great and horrid, and scarcely to be paralleled, villainies our enemies have been guilty of: but now you see my case is desperate; yet know, that I die a MARTYR FOR THE PEOPLE*."

Thus died the beloved, but unfortunate, duke of Monmouth: "who," says Dr. Welwood, "seemed to be born for a better fate: for the first part of his life was all sunshine; though the rest was clouded."—The lord Grey was allowed to compound for his life: the earl of Rochester had 16000*l.* of him; and others had smaller shares. He was required to plead guilty, and to turn witness to the conviction of others, though with this assurance that none should die on his evidence. But the humiliations, with which he obtained his life, gave his spirits a depression, from which he never recovered; and, about ten years afterwards, he cut his own throat†.

Thus terminated a meritorious attempt to rescue the nation from despotism. But it was not planned with prudence; nor furnished with the proper resources for its execution, nor supported by any principal and leading families at home: and the happy opportunities which, in the prosecution of it, did arise, to give it vigor and success, were lost. As it was not a prosperous enterprise it was stigmatized as a *rebellion*; for men often characterize measures more from the event which follows, than from the principles which dictate, them. Had its issue been prosperous, it would have gained the honourable title of a *revolution*. Things were not then sufficiently ripe to effect so glorious a period to the designs of a popish and arbitrary prince; whose councils and government, evidently, were directed to the subversion of the protestant religion, and of our free constitution.

* Western Martyrology, p. 162.

† Burnet's History of his own Times, vol. II. p. 333.

The object of the duke of Monmouth's undertaking was truly patriotic and virtuous : though the plan of his operations was greatly deficient in wisdom. It was reserved for another prince to effect without blood, what it cost him, and his adherents, a great effusion of blood, unsuccessfully, to attempt.

The head being taken off, the accomplices were pursued with severity. For, whereas "wise and good princes," it has been well observed, "content themselves, on such occasions, with punishing the ring-leaders, and some few adherents ; now, by a barbarity not to be paralleled in the reigns of Nero, Caligula, and the most celebrated tyrants ; not only those who had been actually with the duke of Monmouth, but even those who had any way assisted, or so much as harboured them (whether they could help it or not) were equally involved in the crime of his insurrection*."

The lord chief justice Jefferies, with four other judges, and a body of troops, commanded by colonel Kirk, was sent into the west, with a special commission, to try all who had, in any degree, countenanced and aided the duke of Monmouth, and his followers. He sat out on his cruel errand, the latter end of August ; "when he breathed death," as the historian expresses it, "like a destroying angel, and sanguined his very ermines with blood."

He opened his commission at Winchester : where the lady Lisle, for concealing Mr. Hicks, a non-conformist minister, and Mr. Nelthrop (the latter a stranger, and the former in no proclamation) was arraigned for high-treason : though the jury, three times, brought her in, *not guilty*, the menaces of the judge terrified them to change their verdict, and she was beheaded. From Winchester he proceeded to Salisbury : the prisoners, that had been taken up in different parts of the country, and thrown into that gaol, with those brought from Winchester, were, by order, carried to Dorchester : he arrived here on Thursday, September the 3d. After an excellent sermon, on Friday morning, inculcating mercy, at which, as well as in the prayers, the chief justice was seen to laugh, he repaired to the court, which, by his direction, was hung with red cloth. Having delivered a charge,

* History of William III. vol. I. p. 161.

From Dorchester, the chief justice went to Exeter : where 243 persons were in custody for assisting the duke of Monmouth. One of them, Mr. Fowler Acers, pleading *not guilty*, on the jury finding a verdict against him, was immediately sentenced and executed, to terrify the rest ; who all pleaded, *guilty* : they were all condemned, but not so great a proportion executed as in Dorsetshire.

Taunton was the next theatre of his rage and cruelty : where he opened his commission with a charge full of sharp invectives. In this town, and at Wells, were more than 500 prisoners. On the next morning the assizes began, when some put themselves on their trial and were found guilty ; of which number was Mr. Simon Hamlin ; a man of exemplary and respectable character. He lived several miles from the town, and, on hearing that the duke of Monmouth was there, went into Taunton, to advice and urge his son, who resided there, not to take a part ; and was there again on business on the following market-day : being a dissenter, he fell under suspicion. The mayor favoured the prosecution : and, on the evidence of two profligate men, he was convicted. The mayor attempted, afterwards, to save his life, declaring to the judge, that he had committed him by mistake : to which Jeffries replied, “ You have brought him on ; if “ he be innocent, his blood be upon you.” This first cruelty induced the rest to plead *guilty*, in hopes of favour ; though the only favour granted was a respite, for a few days, which those that pleaded *not guilty* could not obtain.

The same expeditious process, the same severe charges to the gentlemen, the same menaces to juries, were used at Wells, as at other places. In the whole of his circuit 264 were executed. At Axbridge 6 suffered ; at Bath, 6 ; at Bridgwater, 12 ; at Bruton, 3 ; at Chard, 12 ; at Castlecary, 3 ; at Crewkerne, 10 ; at Chewton-Mendip, 2 ; at Dorchester, 13 ; at Cothelston, 2 ; at Dunster, 3 ; at Dulverton, 3 ; at Frome, 12 ; at Glastonbury, 6 ; at Ilchester, 12 ; at Ilminster, 12 ; at Keinsham, 11 ; at Langport, 3 ; at Lyme, 12 ; at Minehead, 6 ; at Milbourn-port, 2 ; at Netherstowey, 3 ; at Pensford, 12 ; at Philip's-Norton, 12 ; at Porlock, 2 ; at Redcliffe-hill, Bristol, 6 ; at Shepton-Mallet, 13 ; at Somerton, 7 ; at South-Petherton, 3 ; at Stogursey, 2 ; at Stogumber, 3 ; at Taunton, 19 ; at Wincanton, 6 ; at Wellington, 3 ; at Wells,

Wells, 8; at Wiveliscombe, 3; at Wrington, 3; and, at Yeovil, 8. Thus death, in its most terrifying forms, was exhibited in every quarter; and the country overflowed with blood. Every part of it shewed spectacles, at which decency blushed, and humanity shuddered. The rites of funeral were denied to those who suffered: the houses and steeples were covered with their heads; and the trees loaden almost as thick with quarters, as with leaves. The eye was, every where, shocked with the sight of carcases; and the bleeding hearts of the relatives were again wounded with the view of a parent's, a son's, or a brother's limbs. Numbers, condemned to die, were afterwards delivered over to certain gentlemen, for transportation: as to Sir Philip Howard, 200; to Sir William Booth, 200; to Sir William Stapleton, 100; to Sir Christopher Musgrave, 100; to Jerom Nipho, esq; 100; to captain John Price, 50; and, besides these, to the queen's order, 100. In all, 850. About six of these were afterwards pardoned, and others were transported in their stead. A considerable number were continued in gaol; many were fined; and many of those, who were pardoned or discharged, owed their preservation, not to the equity and mercy, but to the avarice, of their judge. For pardons were granted, not according to the innocence, but the wealth, of the suitor: and sold, as at Rome; different sums, from 10*l.* to 14,000 guineas, being the purchase of them. Of those, who escaped execution, or transportation, 20 were condemned: but their names omitted in the warrant for execution: 52 received sentence, but were kept in gaol till further orders: 75 were recommended to his majesty's favour: 53 obtained pardon, by surrendering within four days after the proclamation: 35 were fined or whipped: 15 discharged, and 16 kept in custody, for want of evidence: and 142 were admitted to bail. Thus 408, who were restored to society, and their friends, were exposed to the risk of a trial, before a rash and unjust court, and suffered the terrors and distresses of a prosecution. The usage they received in person was barbarous. The gaolers were compelled to shew them to every little fellow in authority, so that they were daily insulted: exorbitant charges were made for every thing they had: their relations were not allowed access to them,

them, even in time of sickness; and many died, for want of assistance, of a pestilential distemper.

Where it was allowed that the conduct did not justify a capital sentence; severe whippings were inflicted. Mr. Staple, of Thorncombe, in Devonshire, a man of substance, and much beloved, suffered, under a sentence of this kind, to a degree, that called out the pity of many. Mrs. Brown, of Lyme, for saying, in jest, to an officer, "I will pay my excise to king Monmouth," was found guilty of a misdemeanor, and whipt in several market-towns. A poor lad, of Weymouth, about 10 or 12 years of age, who had taken down, and read, to the people, the duke of Monmouth's declaration, which, in the night, had been fixed up in the town, was tried for it; and punished, in this mode, till the flesh of his back was cut with the lashes, and his life was in great danger*.

But the most affecting instance of the severity with which this mode of punishment was appointed, was afforded by the case of Mr. Tutchin, a young gentleman of Hampshire, engaged in the duke of Monmouth's interest, and who was committed to prison under the borrowed name of Thomas Pitts. Under this name he was tried, and, no person appearing as evidence against him, was acquitted of rebellion. But Jefferies, before he was discharged from prison, having discovered his true name, resolved to revenge the deception, saying, "he was never so far outwitted by an old or young rogue in his life:" he first tried to draw from the young gentleman, by an examination, and by the management of the gaoler, confessions that might convict himself, and information that might impeach some gentlemen, in Hampshire. Being defeated herein by the caution and reserve of Mr. Tutchin, he summoned him to the hall again, but not choosing to indict him for rebellion, he passed on him, for changing his name, the following sentence: "That he should remain in prison during the space of seven years: that once every year he should be whipt through all the market-towns in Dorsetshire: that he should pay a fine of 100 marks to the king, and find security for his good behaviour during life." At this sentence the ladies in the court burst

* Western Martyrology, p. 256—260, p. 266, and p. 182, 183; and Locke's Western Rebellion.

into

into tears: which Jefferies observing turned to them, and said, "Ladies, if you did but know what a villain this is, as well as I do, you would say, that this sentence is not half bad enough for him." The clerk of the arraigns observed to his lordship, "that, as there were a great many market-towns in the county, the sentence reached to a whipping about once a fortnight; and Mr. Tutchin was a very young man." "Aye," said Jefferies, "he is a young man, but an old rogue; and all the interest in England shan't reverse the sentence I have passed on him." Mr. Tutchin drew up a petition to the king, requesting the favour of being hanged with his fellow-prisoners, rather than undergo this severe sentence. The king, as well as the court, was sensible of its barbarous force. But all the answer, which could be obtained, was, "that Mr. Tutchin must wait with patience." Upon this he endeavoured to purchase a pardon: but Jefferies would not hear his name mentioned. A day or two before the execution of the sentence, he was attacked with the small-pox, to a severe degree, and lay by himself, in this condition, without any help, but from his fellow-prisoners: because no one was allowed to have any communication with the gaol, where some scores died, every week, of a pestilential disorder. While he was lying in this miserable condition, and his life was despaired of, the judge was brought over to reverse his sentence*.

It is not possible to conceive the misery and desolation, which these proceedings must spread through the country; which "with the besom of his cruelties" this man, who, as bishop Burnet expresseth it, was perpetually drunk, or in a rage liker a fury than a judge, swept away before him; and depopulated, instead of punished. "Young and old were hanged, by clusters, as if the chief-justice had designed to raise the price of halters: families were extirpated: and, on bare suspicion, a great number were transported beyond sea, and sold for slaves, and the purchase-money given away to papists†." England never saw such scenes of violence, rage, and cruelty, under

* Western Martyrology, p. 224—227. After this Mr. Tutchin visited the chief-justice in the tower.

† Western Martyrology, p. 164, and Secret History of the Reigns of Charles II. and James II. p. 190.

the form of law. Lord Stawel, though a tory, was so shocked at the measures of Jefferies, that he refused to see him. To resent this affront, the judge commanded, that colonel Bovet, a gentleman of Taunton, should be executed at Cothelston, where lord Stawel then resided*.

In an History of Taunton it may be properly expected, that, besides taking this general view of the proceedings of the chief justice, some particular notice should be paid to the memory of those, who suffered in this town.

Among these, Mr. Benjamin Hewling was a leading character. He was the son of an eminent Turkey merchant, in London : a young gentleman, of good education, of singular attainments in mathematics and natural philosophy, of a graceful person, untainted morals, and unaffected piety. He, and his brother, Mr. William Hewling, engaged, as their own words were, with the duke of Monmouth, " for the English liberties and the protestant religion." They came over with the duke, the former, with the command of a troop of horse, and the latter, as a lieutenant of foot. Mr. Benjamin Hewling had particularly signalized himself in several skirmishes, and, a little before the battle of Sedge-moor, was sent, with a detachment of his own troop and two more, to fetch cannon from Minehead ; and came not up, till the field was lost : as the best of Monmouth's men were in this detachment, the fatal catastrophe of the day was supposed to be much owing to their absence. After the dispersing of the duke's army, Mr. Benjamin Hewling, with his brother, fled, and put to sea ; but were driven back again, and at the hazard of their lives, got to shore. Seeing the country filled with soldiers, and every way of defence, or escape, being cut off, they surrendered themselves prisoners to a gentleman, who resided near the place of their landing ; and from thence were sent to Exeter gaol, on the 12th of July.

They were kept here some time, and their behaviour secured the respect of those who were inimical to their cause. On the 27th of July they were put on board the Swan frigate, to be conveyed to

* Locke's Western Rebellion, p. 9, note, f.

London : their carriage, during the passage, conciliated the kindness of the captain and officers. When they arrived in the river Thames, captain Richardson, the keeper of Newgate, took them into his custody, and conducted them to that prison. Here they were separated, great irons put on them, and their friends denied access to them. After great importunity and expence, some of their near relations had permission to speak a few words to them, in the presence of the keeper : to which they replied ; “ they were contented with the will of God, “ whatever it should be.” After three weeks confinement in Newgate, orders were given to bring them down into the west for trial. On being told this, they answered, “ they were glad of it.” The chearfulness of their deportment, at their leaving this prison, surprized the spectators ; who said upon it, “ surely they had received “ their pardon, else they could never carry it with that chearfulness “ and courage.” But the fact was, that, whatever hopes they received from their friends, they had no expectations of this for themselves, from first to last. In their journey to Dorchester, the keepers, who attended them, declared, “ that their carriage was so grave, serious, “ and christian, that made them admire to see and hear, what they “ did from such young men.” And, though their situation, on their journey, from the heavy irons with which they were loaded, and the inhuman treatment they met with, was particularly painful : yet they preserved, through it, the same composure and tranquillity of mind, rising indeed to joy. They professed, “ that “ they were better, and in a more happy condition than ever, in their “ lives, from the sense of the pardoning love of God, in Jesus Christ, “ to their souls ; wholly referring themselves to their wise and gracious “ God, to choose for them life or death :” expressing themselves thus ; “ Any thing, what pleases God, what he sees best, so be it : we “ know, that he is able to deliver, but, if not, blessed be his name : “ death is not terrible, now but desirable.” Mr. Benjamin Hewling, particularly, added : “ As for the world, there is nothing in it “ to make it worth while to live, except we may be serviceable to “ God therein.” And afterwards said, “ Oh ! God is a strong refuge : I have found him so indeed.”

On the 6th of September, he was commanded to be conducted, for trial, to Taunton; and, on taking leave of a near relation, who staid at Dorchester, to see the issue of his brother's trial, he said; "Oh! blessed be God for afflictions; I have found such happy effects, that I would not have been without them for all this world."

The event of his trial was, his being condemned to die. To the end, he continued to express a superiority to the fear of death, a chearful expectation of it, and a strong sense of spiritual and eternal things; complaining of nothing, in his circumstances, but want of a place of retirement, to give full and uninterrupted vent to his devotional feelings. He expressed great pleasure in the review of the penitent sentiments, with which his mind had been impressed, and of the conviction he had of the blessedness of a reconciliation with God, the excellency of holiness, and the pleasures of piety. To these sentiments he was no stranger, during the hurries of a military life; but he reflected on his confinement, in Newgate, as the sweetest period of his existence, because, then they were most lively and powerful.

He spoke of the disappointment, that had attended the cause, in which he had embarked, with much concern and grief; because of the connexion he conceived it had with the glory of God, and the freedom of his country: but, as to the personal prosperity, which might have arisen from it, he declared, that it appeared to him of small account, as it could not have been either satisfying or permanent, for death would have put a period to it all. He added, "that, perhaps, he might have been so foolish as to have been captivated with it, to the neglect of eternal concerns; and, in this view, his present circumstances were incomparably better."

His converse was tinged with expressions of great delight in the most holy and virtuous characters, of strong compassion for the spiritual welfare of others, and of earnest solicitude to awaken them to serious views and sentiments: saying, "that death and eternity are such weighty concerns, that they deserve the utmost attention of our minds: that the way to receive death, chearfully, is to pre-
pare

“pare for it seriously: and that, if God should please to spare their lives, there was the same reason to be serious, and spend their remaining days, in his fear and service.” He took great care to maintain the worship of God with his fellow-prisoners.

Three or four days before he or they, who were condemned with him, were to suffer death, there was a report that no more should die: on which, he said, “I don’t know what God hath done, beyond our expectations: if he doth prolong my life, I am sure it is all his own, and, by his grace, I will wholly devote it to him.” But this report was not well founded: and so far was it from being true, that when Miss Hannah Hewling, his sister, supplicated the judge’s mercy, in behalf of her brother, and offered 100*l.* for the respite of the execution, for two days only, he refused her even this small favour: and, as she hung on his coach, imploring his attention to her suit, he commanded the coachman to cut her hands and fingers with his whip, to make her let go her hold. And, on the 29th of September, about ten or eleven, at night, they were told they must die the next morning. This notice was sudden and unexpected: on which Mr. Hewling made this reflection; “Though men design to surprize, God doth, and will, perform his word, to be a very present help in trouble.”

On the morning of his execution, his chearfulness and comfort were much increased: and he waited for the sheriff with the greatest serenity of mind, saying; “Now the will of God is determined, to whom I have referred it, and he hath chosen, most certainly, that which is best.” Afterwards, with a smiling countenance, he discoursed on the glory of heaven, remarking, with much delight, on the 3d, 4th, and 5th verses of the 22d chapter of Revelations: then he desired to have the 2d of Corinthians, chap. v. to the 10th verse, read to him. His comforts increased, and he expressed his pleasurable hopes, and good assurance, of his interest in this glorious inheritance, and of his being about to take possession of it. On this ground he said, “death was more desirable than life: and that he had rather die than live any longer.” As to the manner of his death, he said: “When I have considered others under these circumstances,

“ I have thought it very dreadful ; but, now God hath called me to
 “ it, I bless God I have quite other apprehensions of it : I can now,
 “ chearfully, embrace it as an easy passage to glory : and, though
 “ death separates from the enjoyment of each other here, it will be
 “ but for a very short time, and then we shall meet in such enjoyments
 “ as now we cannot conceive, and for ever rejoice in each other’s
 “ happiness.” Then, reading the scriptures, and musing with himself,
 he intimated the great comfort he derived from it ; saying, “ O what
 “ an invaluable treasure is the blessed word of God ! in all conditions
 “ there is a store of strong consolations.” One desiring his bible, he
 said ; “ No, this shall be my companion to the last moment of my life.”
 He and his fellow sufferers maintained, and displayed, the same serene,
 chearful, and devout frame of mind to the last moment : the spectators
 were affected and astonished ; saying, “ that it both broke and re-
 “ joiced their hearts, and made death appear with another aspect.”
 The soldiers, who had insultingly said, “ Surely these persons have
 “ no thoughts of death, but will find themselves surprized by it ;”
 now changed their tone, declaring ; “ that they now saw he and they
 “ had something extraordinary within, that carried them through
 “ with such joy.” Others of them said, “ that they were so convinced
 “ of their happiness, that they would be glad to change conditions
 “ with them.” A great officer, in the king’s army, was often heard
 to say : “ If you would learn to die, go to the young men of Taun-
 “ ton.” And some of the bitterest of their enemies, in the town,
 as they were carried to their grave, declared ; “ that those persons
 “ had left a sufficient evidence, that they were now glorified saints
 “ in heaven.”

Mr. Benjamin Hewling was but 22. His brother, who was
 younger, was executed, about the same time, at Lyme, and met
 death with the like magnanimity and alacrity*. The enormous sum
 of

* Mr. Granger gives us the following striking anecdote concerning the grand-father of
 the Hewlings, on their mother’s side, Mr. Wm. Kiffin, an eminent merchant. This person,
 who was thought to have a considerable influence in London, was therefore sent for to court
 by king James, who told him, that he had put his name as an alderman in his new charter.
 “ Sir,” replied Kiffin, “ I am a very old man ; I have withdrawn myself from all kinds
 “ of

of 1000l. was exacted, of the sister of Mr. Benjamin Hewling, for permission to bury his remains, in St. Mary Magdalen's church; and this, not without the interest of a great officer in the king's army*.

Among others, who were executed with Mr. B. Hewling, was Mr. Parret, a brewer, of the city of London. He had been very zealous for the duke, by whom he was made a major. He met death, as a man almost unconcerned at it, and addressed the spectators, more like a minister, in the pulpit, than a prisoner, going to be executed†.

Another, who suffered at the same time, was Mr. Abraham Ansley, who was first made a lieutenant, and afterwards a captain of foot, was engaged in every action, and nobly disdained preserving his own life, as he might have done, on the condition of impeaching others. He died, declaring that he had acted from a conviction that it was his duty to venture his life in defence of the protestant religion against popery and arbitrary power; and that, had he a thousand lives, they should all be engaged in the same cause‡.

A third fellow-sufferer, on the same day, was Mr. William Jenkyn; a young gentleman of sober, virtuous manners, great vivacity, and ready wit. He had a happy genius for mechanics, and was a good classical scholar. His father was a non-conformist minister in London; who, for his opinion, had been cast into Newgate, where confinement and want of usual exercise soon killed him: which led this his only son to give rings, at his funeral, with the following motto; "William Jenkyn§, murdered in Newgate." The death

of

"of business for some years past, and am incapable of doing any service, in such an affair, to your majesty or the city. Besides, sir," (the old man went on, fixing his eyes stedfastly on the king, while the tears ran down his cheeks) "the death of my grandsons gave me a wound, which is still bleeding, and never will close but in the grave." Biographical History, vol. IV. p. 324, note.

* Locke's Western Rebellion, p. 2.

† Western Martyrology, p. 188.

‡ Idem, p. 204.

§ The sentiment conveyed, in this motto, naturally suggested itself to his mourning son from what the father said a little before his death, viz. that a man might be as effectually murdered in Newgate as at Tyburn. He died there, January 19, 1685, aged 72, having been a prisoner four months. A nobleman, having heard of his happy release, said to the king;

of his father impressed his mind with a strong sense of the iniquitous measures of government, and disposed him to embark in opposition to it. He and several young gentlemen rode down, from London, into the west, a little before the duke of Monmouth landed: and were taken up on suspicion, and thrown into Ilchester gaol; where they lay, till the duke came and released them: in whose army Mr. Jenkyn continued, till the rout. He was tried and condemned at Dorchester. When he was apprized of the uncertainty of procuring his pardon; he replied, "Well, death is the worst they can do; and, I bless God, that will not surprize me, for I hope my great work is done." So far from being dejected at the prospect of it, he did not appear to loose any of his natural liveliness and spirits, and was rather censured as inconsiderate of his condition: to which he answered, "Truly, this is so much my natural temper, that I cannot tell how to alter it: but, I bless God, I have and do think, seriously, of my eternal concerns: I do not allow myself to be vain, but I find cause to be chearful, for my peace is made with God, through Jesus Christ my Lord: this is my only ground of comfort and chearfulness, the security of my interest in Christ; for I expect nothing but death: and, without this, I am sure death would be most dreadful: but, having the good hope of this, I cannot be melancholy." When he was urged to attempt an escape, under disguise, he declined it; saying, "No; I cannot tell how to disturb myself about it, and methinks it is not my business, now I have other things to take up my thoughts: if God saw good to deliver me, he would open some other door; but, seeing he has not, it is more for the honour of his name we should die, and so be it." When no prospect of saving his life was left, though interest was made, and several schemes formed, with that view, he spake much of the admirableness of God's providence in those things that seem most against us, bringing the greatest good out of them:

king; "May it please your majesty, Jenkyn has got his liberty." Upon which he asked with eagerness, "Aye, who gave it him?" The nobleman replied, "A greater than your majesty, the king of kings:" with which the king seemed greatly struck, and remained silent. See Palmer's Non-conformist's Memorial, vol. I. p. 100.

"For,"

“ For,” said he, “ we can see but a little way: God is only wise in all his disposals of us: if we were left to choose for ourselves, we should choose our own misery.”

The sentiments, with which he reflected on the part he had acted, appear from a letter to his mother, on the night preceding his execution. To whom he wrote thus: “ I bless God, I die with a clear conscience; and, though I have deserved much worse, at the hands of God, for my past sins, than I am like to undergo, yet I count, with respect to man, I die a martyr for the protestant religion, and merely for doing my duty in opposing that flood of popery, which seemed to be just overwhelming the church and interest of Christ in these nations: and I wish that the prudentialists of our age, that have withdrawn their helping hand from so glorious a design, do not, within a few days, feel the smart they have deserved by this their baseness.” The honourable thoughts he entertained concerning the divine providence, are expressed in a letter to a sister a few days before this. “ And now, dear sister, I take my leave of you, and commit you to the protection of that God, who has made every thing beautiful in his time, and will shew you the meaning of this providence, which now we do not understand: to whom, I trust, I am now going, and in the enjoyment of whose presence I doubt not but, ere long, you will meet, dear sister, your affectionate brother.”

Many such devout and rational sentiments he delivered, under the view of his death. When it was observed, that the apostles died a violent death, he replied; “ Nay, a greater than the apostles, our Lord himself, died, not only a shameful, but a violent, death:” adding, “ This manner of death hath been the most terrible thing in the world to my thoughts: but, I bless God, now I am neither afraid, nor ashamed to die.”

The same cheerfulness and serenity of mind appeared to the last; and, indeed, increased and brightened his countenance with comfort and joy; insomuch that some of his enemies, who had censured his cheerfulness as inconsideration, and expected to see him much surprised, professed themselves astonished, that such a young man,
(but

(but one or two and twenty) should leave the world, and go through death as he did*.

Mr. Hucker, whom we have noticed particularly in a former chapter, having conducted himself, under confinement, with a christian spirit, displayed a pious fortitude, at the last moments, which astonished the spectators.

Another, out of the 19 executed at the same time, was Mr. Gatehill, constable of the hundred; who had been forced, against his inclinations, by some of the duke's party, to execute a warrant for bringing in provisions for the army. As he was drawn to execution, he looked on the people, and said; "A populous town: God bless it†."

Besides the courage and cheerfulness, with which these persons, and others, who laid down their lives in the same cause, died; it was also remarked, that most, if not all, dropt expressions, which not only indicated their confidence in the final success of the cause of liberty and protestantism, for which they suffered, but forebodings of that great deliverance, which providence, in a few years, accomplished by the prince of Orange.

Mr. Nelthrop said, "God had, in his wonderful providence, made him, and others, instruments, not only in what was already fallen out, but, he believed, for hastening *some other great work*, he had yet to do in these kingdoms."—Mrs. Gaunt's words were; "God's cause shall revive, and he will plead it at another rate than he hath yet done; against all its malicious opposers:" and she added, with reference to those who are in power, "that, though they were seemingly fixed, and using their power and violence against those they had now got under them, yet, unless they could *secure Jesus Christ*, and all *his holy angels*, they should never do their business, but vengeance would be upon them, *ere they were aware*."—Captain Ansley declared his expectation, "that, though it had pleased the wise God, for reasons best known to himself, now to blast their designs, yet he would deliver his people, by

* Western Martyrology, p. 122—128.

† Idem, p. 214, 215.

" ways

“ways they knew not, nor thought of.”—Mr. Hewling expressed the same hope, saying; “I question not, but, in his own time, God will raise up other instruments to carry on the same cause they died for, for his own glory.”—Mr. Larke declared, “that he was confident God would revenge their bloods.”—To mention no more, Mr. Parret died, desiring “all not to be faint-hearted, because of their fall, and to think that there were no hopes remaining;” adding, “he verily believed, God would yet work out deliverance for them, and, at the time they were in the greatest extremity, that would be God’s opportunity. Put your whole trust and confidence and dependence in the Lord, and he will never leave you nor forsake you*.”

Such language, so strongly expressive of the firmness of their minds, conveying so full a conviction of the rectitude of their cause, and so lively a persuasion of its final success, naturally made great

* Western Martyrology, p. 103, 104, and p. 189. Mr. Sampson Larke, who was executed at Lyme the 12th of September, was an eminent, pious, aged, non-conformist minister, very charitable to the poor, and assiduous in the duties of his function. His death was greatly lamented, not only by his congregation, but by the inhabitants of the town. As he was about to address the populace before his execution, he was interrupted, by the guard, with this laconic observation: “that the work of the day was so great they could not afford him time.” To which he replied, “he could make application, where he should not meet with interruption:” and so prayed with great devotion and fervor.—Mrs. Gaunt, who resided at Wapping, and was a baptist, is represented to have been an excellent woman, of great hospitality, and kindness, to all true christians; though, in some things, of a different persuasion. Her particular business and delight was to visit the gaols, and assist, relieve, and entertain, those who suffered for conscience sake, and for their opposition to popery and arbitrary government. Among others, whom she saved from starving, was one Burton, with his wife and family. These persons were so infamously ungrateful, as to lay this kindness to themselves in charge against her: and for this, though the evidence was legally insufficient, she was condemned to die, and burnt the 23d of October.—Mr. Nelthrop was one of those, whom lady Lisle had sheltered: he was accused and executed for being concerned in a design to assassinate king Charles II. and the duke of York; which, in his last moments, he explicitly and solemnly denied. He came over with the duke of Monmouth: was first committed to the prison, at Salisbury, and then removed to Newgate. He was executed the 30th of October. He generously disdained the offer made him, of saving his own life, by becoming an evidence against others. The agitation of his mind, during his close confinement, at length terminated in distraction: but, before his execution, the exercise of his judgment and understanding returned; and he died, not only with composedness of mind, but with comfort and joy; addressing the spectators in a speech, at once pertinent and recollected, and breathing suitable sentiments of charity and devotion. Western Martyrology, p. 173, &c. p. 130—140.

impressions on the spectators. It must appear to those who review it at this distance of time, as something extraordinary; especially, when it is considered, that these were the sentiments of persons of different sexes and ages, and in different places; uttered in a calm and serene state of mind: and, that they were afterwards signally confirmed by the correspondent event. If we do not ascribe these declarations to a divine foresight, we must confess, that they could arise from nothing short of full, rational views of the nature and merits of the cause, in which they had engaged, as involving in it the civil and religious interests of the nation; and an unusual comprehension of mind, looking above present discouraging and dark appearances. And, it is not to be doubted, but that the very disappointment and sufferings, which they experienced, did really operate to bring about a revolution; to make it an object of more general and ardent desire; and even to precipitate it, by leaving king James, for the present, more at liberty to push his unconstitutional, oppressive, and odious measures.

But, waving these reflections, it is time to return to Taunton; which was marked, besides the executions we have mentioned, with other scenes of oppression and cruelty. The maidens, who carried the colours before the duke of Monmouth, though some of them were children of eight or ten years old, were not suffered to escape the rigour of the chief-justice's inquisition. Miss Mary Blake, for making the colours presented to the duke, was committed to Dorchester gaol, where she died of the small-pox, which disease then prevailed in the prison. Another, of these young ladies, surrendered herself, in the court, begging mercy from the judge; who, when she was produced before him, looked on her with a very fierce countenance, and, raving, commanded the gaoler to take her. This struck such terror into the poor girl, that, pulling her hood over her face, she fell a weeping: and the gaoler, removing her immediately out of the court, she died, not many hours after, with fear*.

When, this minister of royal resentment being tired with executions and glutted with blood, a general pardon, with exceptions, came out; these young ladies were amongst the exceptions. The view of

* Western Martyrology, p. 221—250.

the court was to raise sums of money, for their ransom, from their parents; which were granted, as a Christmas-box, to the maids of honour. The amount of the demand was 7000*l*. Mr. Bird, the town-clerk, would have officiously intruded himself, as agent, into the management of this business: but his services were refused. The duke of Somerset took up the affair in favour of the court ladies; and solicited, by letter, the assistance of Sir Francis Warre, bart. of Hestercombe; to whom he applied to have the mistresses and the maidens, of whose names he sent a list, taken into custody. He requested this gentleman to recommend some person, in whom he could confide, to take the active part under his direction, and whom, by a letter of attorney, the maids of honour might employ to sue the girls. But Sir Francis Warre, unwilling to be concerned in the business, represented to the duke, that the school-mistress was a woman of mean birth, and that the scholars worked the banner by her orders, without knowing of any offence*. On this further proceedings

* On the information of C. W. Bampfylde, esq; by whose obliging communications, the author is furnished with the following copies of the duke of Somerset's letters:

I doe here send you a list of the Taunton Maydes you living soe nere to Taunton makes me think that you know some of them, therefore pray send me word by the first oportunity whether any of these are in custody and whoe they are, and if any one of these are not in custody lett them be secured especially the Schoole Mistresse and likewise send me word if you know any one of these because there are some friends of mine that I belive upon easy terms might get their pardon of the king, pray send me an answer by the first oportunity and in so doing this you will oblige your humble Servant

London, Dec. 12, 1685.

(The address torn off.)

SOMERSET.

I have acquainted the Maydes of honour with this buisnesse of Mr. Birde and they doe all say that he never had any authority from them to proceede in this matter and that they have this post writt to him not to trouble himselfe any more in this affaire soe that if you will proceede on this matter according to my former letter you will infinitely oblige your very humble Servant

Jan. 14, 1685.

SOMERSET.

If you can secure any of them pray doe and lett me have account of this letter as soon as you can.

For Sir Francis Warre, Bart.

To be left at post-house in Taunton, Somersets:

We have here thought fitt that things would be better managed if there was a letter of Attorney given to some body (that you should think fitt and capable of) for to ayde and

Y 2

assist

ceedings were dropt. But not till the sums of 100l. and 50l. had been gained from the parents of some of them*.

It is not to be wondered at, that the name of Jefferies has been, ever since, odious in the west of England: and continued, while the memory of his transactions was fresh, to excite indignation and horror. It was the name of a murderer, in the robes of the lord chief justice, openly trampling upon the laws themselves. Mr. Granger, whose language I have adopted, says, "he has seen an old woman, who kept a little ale-house, and whose mother was an eye-witness to the shocking barbarities of those times, kindle into rage, and melt into pity, upon relating the catastrophe of Monmouth, and the cruelties of Jefferies: and that the late countess of Pomfret met with very rude insults from the populace on the western road, only because she was the grand-daughter of this inhuman judge*."

To this detail of cruelties, practised under the cloak of a judicial process, must be added the military executions of colonel Kirk (called by Eachard, a bold and loose soldier of fortune), whose violence and barbarity surpassed, if possible, the proceedings of Jefferies. He was an officer in the king's army at the battle of Sedgemoor: and, on the day after the event of that battle, he came to Taunton with a number of prisoners and two cart loads of wounded men. He immediately hanged 19 of these, on the Cornhill, by military law, their wounds yet bleeding; without any form of trial, or even suffering

assist you in it that these may be noe other to transact this buisnesse but your selfe and another of your recommending that should busle and stir about to ease you, if that you know of any such man that you can trust pray lett me know it by the first oportunity that the Maydes of honour may signe his letter of Attorney, pray lett them know that if they doe thus put it off from time to time that the Maydes of honour are resolved to sue them to an Outlary, so that pray do you advise them to comply with what is reasonable (which I think 7000 is) for them: I must beg a thousand times over your pardone for giving you this trouble and will never omitt any thing wherein I can serve you Sir I am your very humble Servant

London, Jan. 21, 1685 6.

For Sir Francis Warre, Bart.

SOMERSET.

To be left at the post-house in Taunton, Somersetts:

* Western Martyrology, p. 266, and Mr. Locke's MS.

† Biographical History, vol. IV. p. 308, 309.

their -

their wives and children to speak to them, and to soothe their last agonies by a farewell embrace. As they were executing, this barbarous officer, who had long commanded at Tangier, and there learnt savageness from the Moors, commanded the pipes to play, the trumpets to sound, and the drums to beat, that the music might drown the cries of the dying victims, and the lamentations of the populace and relatives. The mangled bodies of these unfortunate men were, by his order, immediately stripped, their breasts cleaved asunder, and their hearts, while warm, were separately thrown into a large fire; and, as each was cast in, a great shout was raised, saying, "There goes the heart of a *traitor*." When they were burnt, their quarters were boiled in pitch, and hung up at all the cross ways and public parts of the town and neighbourhood.

He hanged one man, on the White-Hart sign-post, three times, to try, whether he would own that he had done amiss: but, when he expressed a resolute adherence to the cause in which he suffered, and said, if it were to do again, he would engage in it, Kirk directed he should be hung in chains. When the rope, with which a captain of W—— was hanged, broke, and gave him the flattering hope that he should save his life, a ring-rope was taken from a market horse, and the execution completed. As no executioner could be procured in Somersetshire, the colonel sent to Exeter for one belonging to the county of Devon: who, in discharging his office, was observed to be above his ankles in human blood.

The name of *lamb*s, which colonel Kirk gave to the soldiers, who were most ready and active in the service, marked the pleasure with which he saw his cruel orders executed.

The colonel, one day, invited his officers to an entertainment, and, after dinner, he commanded 30 men to be executed, by 10 at a time, while the glass went round in three healths; one to the king, a second to the queen, and a third to judge Jefferies; of whom news was just then received, that he was to try the rebels. When, in the last agonies of departing life, the feet of the dying were observed to shake, he would cry out: "They shall have music to their dancing;" and commanded his trumpets to sound, and the drums to beat, surrounded
by

by the soldiers, with the colours flying*. “This,” observes bishop Burnet, “was both so illegal and inhuman, that it might have been expected that some notice would have been taken of it;” whereas Kirk was only chid for it. But the most shocking outrage against all decency, generosity, and humanity, with which, if it be true, the character of colonel Kirk is blackened, is his conduct to a beautiful young woman, whom he decoyed to his embraces with the promise of sparing the life of a person, endeared to her by blood or affection: and, in the morning, he is said to have conducted the credulous, abused female, to see the person, for whom she had made the sacrifice of her virtue, hanging on the sign-post of the inn, where he had glutted his brutal lust. Shame, remorse, and distraction, seized the unhappy, injured fair one; and she died within a few days†.

When

* Mr. Locke’s MS. *Western Martyrology*, p. 216. Bishop Burnet’s *History of his own Times*, vol. II. p. 334.

† The reader will observe, that the above horrid fact is related in a manner, that intimates some doubt of its credibility. The truth of it has, very lately, been doubted and discussed in a periodical work, principally devoted to literature and antiquities. It is alleged against the reality of it, that there is a disagreement in the evidence; one writer says, that the young woman yielded herself to Kirk’s desire for the sake of her husband, another for her father, and another for her brother; and though jealousy might have urged the execution of a husband, in case the person were a father or a brother, it is not to be conceived what end his death would have answered: that it is incredible, that a man who could have committed such an inhuman action, such a wanton barbarity, could afterwards have been consulted with the Sidneys and Cavendishes on the plan for the revolution; or that the glorious William could have armed such a wretch in the cause of LIBERTY: that the original story, which party virulence applied to Kirk, may be found, if not in Shakespeare’s “Measure for Measure,” in N^o 491, of the *Spectator*: where, we are told, that the duke of Burgundy executed Rhynfaut, governor of Zealand, for having abused the credulity of Sapphira, the wife of Paul Danvelt, under the idea of pardoning a supposed crime of her husband; and then, deviating from the terms of the agreement, set up false witnesses against him, that procured his execution: or, that the Roman history furnishes the prototype of Kirk, in a rich citizen, who redeemed a debtor to the Roman treasury, condemned to be hanged, anno 340, on the ignoble terms of abusing his bed, and afterwards deceived him: and, to these arguments it may be added, that writers who are by no means disposed to be partial and favourable to the reputation of colonel Kirk; Bishop Burnet, the author of the *Western Martyrology*, and Oldmixon, bring no such charge against him: and that, afterwards, the people of Taunton, in commemoration of his defence of Londonderry, devoted an evening to the drinking his health in public, the expences of which may be now seen in an old church book. On the other hand, it is, and may be, argued: that it is immaterial, what relation the person, who suffered, bore to the

When he was afterwards upbraided with his cruelties, by colonel Foulkes, who was with the duke of Monmouth, and afterwards commanded a regiment in king William's service, he declared ; that he did nothing, but by an express order from the king and his general : and protested, that his commission went further ; and that he had put a restraint upon the power and instructions that were

the deluded female ; and that a variation in the account might easily take place, though the general fact was undeniable : that, as to the purposes which the execution could serve, the whole conduct of Kirk shews, that he was not governed by reasons of equity, propriety, or utility ; but hurried on by cruelty, and revenge, the insolence of power, and the view of court favour ; whetted by a recent victory over reputed rebels : that it is not clear, that he was *consulted* on the plan of the revolution : or, if he were, his attachment to protestantism*, and his resolution and abilities, as an officer, would be considered, as entitling him to confidence and employment ; especially, when private virtue is not, generally, the rule of state measures, nor the ground of preferments, civil or military : that the resemblance between this and other stories, in ancient or modern times, is no proof, that the former was borrowed from the latter, for similar passions will, in different ages and countries, produce similar effects ; and the allowed truth of such stories renders this more credible, because they shew, that, disgraceful and shocking to human nature as are such instances of cruelty and barbarity, yet man is capable of such actions : that it is very improbable, that the charge against Kirk could be borrowed from the fact in the Roman history, as the author St. Augustine, in whom it is found, is not commonly known ; and, as to the fact in the Spectator, this impeachment of colonel Kirk could not be derived from *that*, for it is conveyed in Pomfret's Poem of " Cruelty and Lust," written years before, the author of which died in 1702, whereas the Spectator was not published till 1712 : that, besides this, the historians, Kennet and Eachard, related this deed of Kirk, before the appearance of that paper : who would not have asserted such a circumstance, without authority ; or, if they had done so, would certainly have been refuted by the other party, at the very time. To these arguments, it should be added, that, in the town of Taunton, there has prevailed an unsuspecting tradition of it. And the celebration of Kirk's conduct, at Londonderry, by the inhabitants of Taunton, goes no more to prove his innocence in this, than in other instances, where his character, undoubtedly, lies under a stigma. Nothing is more fluctuating than popular resentment and applause ; and present joy obliterates, for a time, the remembrance of past injuries. I have endeavoured to state the evidence, relative to this horrid action, fully and impartially : and will leave it to the reader to draw the conclusion for himself. Should he judge, that Kirk is guilty of the charge with which his name is reproached ; it may be still supposed, that the matter was exaggerated ; it might have been out of his power to have saved the life, which he actually intended to have preserved ; and, his conducting the unhappy damsel, to the window, at that critical moment, might probably be the mere effect of accident. Locke's MS. Gentleman's Magazine, for May, 1789, p. 438, and for February, 1790, p. 104, 105, and Holt's Characters of the Kings and Queens of England, vol. III.

* When Kirk was tampered with, in the reign of king James, to embrace popery, he replied ; " that he " was already pre engaged, having promised the king of Morocco, when in Tangier, that, if ever he changed " his religion, he would turn mahometan."

given him*. Though it should not be ascribed to his humanity, but his avarice, it is certain, that many persons escaped by his pretended pardons : which he sold for 20l. 30l. and 40l. a piece. They were not valid in law, yet they afforded those, who purchased, time to settle their affairs, and retreat to Holland and other places of shelter.

Jefferies, after his barbarous expedition, was heard to boast, with a sort of brutish pleasure, “ that he had hanged more men than all “ the judges of England, since William the conqueror.” A boast, it is well observed, much like that of the duke of Alva, whose blood-thirstiness seemed to be infused into him. Some catholics have attempted to exculpate king James from the charge of authorising and approving the cruel measures of Jefferies’ tribunal, and have said, that he shewed his indignation ; but the fact is against their defence of the king. For Jefferies returned triumphantly to London, and was received, with open arms, by the king ; who created him a baron and peer of England ; a dignity to which no judge had been, for several ages, advanced ; and which was generally looked upon as inconsistent with the character : and, soon after, he was placed at the head of the highest tribunal in the kingdom, being made lord-chancellor, “ in consideration of the many eminent and faithful services “ he had rendered the crown, as well in the late king’s time, as since “ his majesty’s accession to the crown.” And, when Mr. Tutchin, afterwards, visited him in the Tower ; he himself declared ; “ that “ his instructions were much more severe than the execution of them, “ and that, at his return, he was snub’d, at court, for being too “ merciful†.” It was likewise a proof that all his excesses were justly imputed to the king ; that a particular account of all his proceedings, was, daily, written to his majesty : who took a pleasure to relate them, in the drawing room, to foreign ministers, and, at his table, calling it “ Jefferies’ campaign‡.” As much as these imputations on the king may shock the mind, they are naturally resolved

* History of William III. vol. I. p. 170. Oldmixon’s History of the Stuarts, p. 705.

† History of William III. vol. I. p. 170. Granger’s Biographical History, vol. IV. p. 309, and Western Martyrology, p. 227.

‡ Burnet’s History of his own Times, vol. II. p. 335.

into

into the despotic aims which directed his government. James was a *tyrant*, and *all tyrants are cruel*; and it is a maxim, which regulates their councils, "That, as to the quantity of blood it may cost, to complete their designs, it ought not to be taken at all into the account, or considered as of any consequence*." To such sanguinary sentiments are the hearts of despots reconciled, nay, familiarized.

The evil consequences of the defeat of the duke of Monmouth did not terminate with the severities of colonel Kirk, in his military capacity, or of Jefferies, in his judicial office: but were deeply felt in the subsequent measures, which the king afterwards pursued: who now thought himself at liberty to act without controul. It afforded him a pretence to increase the number of his standing forces, pleading that the militia was not to be depended on, and that he had suffered, in his reputation, by being so miserably unprovided against the duke of Monmouth's wretched attempt†. He violated the test law, by retaining in his army, against the remonstrance of the parliament, unqualified popish officers. He dissolved his parliament in resentment, and displayed, without disguise, his unbounded zeal for popery. In violation of the laws, a Roman prelate publicly made his entry into London, in the character of the pope's nuncio; and the duke of Somerset was disgraced for not paying him that respect, which the laws of the land made criminal‡. In like opposition and contempt of those laws, the earl of Castlemain was dispatched to Rome, with the train and pomp of ambassador extraordinary; with instructions to reconcile the kingdoms of England, and Scotland, and Ireland, to the Holy See, from which they had, for more than an age, fallen off by heresy. And the jesuits, though, from deep policy, the court of Rome gave him

* This was the language of Joseph II. late emperor of Germany, with regard to the suppression of the recent revolution in the Netherlands. See his letters to general Dalton, in the *Analytical Review*, for February, 1790, p. 225.

† Secret History of Charles II. and James II. p. 192.

‡ This nobleman, being first lord of the bed-chamber in waiting, was expected to assist in the ceremony of the nuncio's entry: but he told the king, he could not serve upon this occasion, being assured, it was contrary to law. The king asked him, if he did not know, that he was above the law. The other replied, if the king were, he himself was not above the law; for which he was dismissed from all employments. Reresby's *Memoirs*, as quoted by Granger. *Biographical History*, vol. IV. p. 265, 266.

but a cold reception, entertained him with the greatest magnificence, and employed sculpture, painting, poetry, and rhetoric, to testify their respect for him and his royal master; on whom they lavished their panegyrics, as the magnanimous king, whose open zeal had restored to England its ancient religion*.

In prosecution of this design, James arrogated to himself a power to dispense with the laws. The doctrine advanced, in the courts of justice, by his authority, was; that his declaration ought to be obeyed, if the king had been a Turk or a Jew: and that, though any man might petition in his private affairs, yet, to petition about government was a libel, and of bad consequence†. But he not only assumed, but acted by this dispensing power. The force of various acts of parliament, and the statutes of the university of Oxford, were set aside by a dispensation granted, May 1686, to the master and fellows of University college, to absent themselves from the religious service of the church of England: to another member of the university, to release him from any duties enjoined by the act of uniformity or other acts: and, to John Maffey, M. A. fellow of Merton college, to enjoy the deanery of Christ-church, without being obliged to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, without any test or sacrament, without any declaration or subscription, with respect to religion, or performing any acts in conformity to the discipline and liturgy of the church of England. To reconcile the minds of the people to these stretches of prerogative, and to diffuse principles of slavery and despotism, Mr. Obadiah Walker had a licence, for 21 years, to print and sell, not exceeding in one year 20,000 copies of various books, in favour of the hierarchy, doctrines, services, and practices, of the church of Rome‡.

In correspondence with these measures, and to bear down the laws and constitution of the realm, a new court of inquisition was erected, under the name of a commission for ecclesiastical affairs. This com-

* Welwood's Memoirs, p. 177, 178.

† Justice Allibon's Charge at the assizes at Croydon. *Collectanea Curiosa*, vol. IV. No. 6, p. 397.

‡ *Collectanea Curiosa*, vol. I. No. 34—37.

mission was repugnant to an express act of parliament : and though somewhat to save appearances, some bishops of the church of England were named commissioners, who declined acting, Roman catholics were invested with that authority, and made judges of the doctrine and discipline of a protestant church. The proceedings of these commissioners soon manifested the design and object of their power. Dr. Compton, bishop of London, was suspended by this court, because he had not suspended Dr. Sharpe, who had incurred the king's displeasure, by preaching against the corruptions of popery. The next, who felt the tyranny of this ecclesiastical commission were, the new president and fellows of Magdalen college, in Oxford ; who likewise were suspended and declared incapable of any ecclesiastical benefice or promotion, because they had opposed the king's mandate, appointing them to elect, as president, one Farmer, a man of bad character, and who had promised to declare himself a papist : though such an election would have been a violation of the statutes of the founder, and involved them in the guilt of perjury.

But no measure of king James gave so great an alarm, as the imprisonment and trial of seven bishops : who refused to read his second declaration for liberty of conscience ; which, besides proceeding with the former, on the ground of the royal power to dispense with the laws, was drawn up in an higher strain, and chiefly included papists*. After this no doubt could remain what were the designs of the king. In fact a systematical scheme of despotism was formed, and a model of government, for the direction of the king, was drawn up and presented to him by a jesuit. The great outlines of the plan were to establish a council of reformation, to act on the principles of the inquisition—to subject the civil powers to the ecclesiastical—to appoint new modes of choosing parliaments, particularly by giving the bishop of the diocese a negative voice to set aside the election of a knight of the shire—to make it treason, when the Roman catholic faith was once settled, to propose a change of it—and to observe new methods in leasing of lands, disposing of children, and ordering of servants—to keep low those who were so†.

* Welwood's Memoirs, p. 197—212.

† Gee's Jesuit's Memorial.

This detail shews how nearly the ardour of king James, in the prosecution of his favourite projects, encouraged by the defeat of the duke of Monmouth, had precipitated the nation into ruin, and rivetted on it the chains of popery and slavery. It shews the importance and necessity of the REVOLUTION, effected by William III. "If James II. had gone on without controul, words would not easily be able to express the miseries into which we should have fallen." But the REVOLUTION disarmed *despotism*: and put *popery* to flight. In religion, it gave toleration: to our political constitution, it secured freedom. It assigned, to the prerogative of the crown, its limits: and it defined the rights of the people. It put the sceptre into the hand of the prince of Orange, as a *free gift* of the nation, and it bound him by the most sacred ties, to hold it, as a *trust*. "To the *revolution* this nation owes a hundred years of liberty and prosperity; and, if we do not forget the " Lord which brought us forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage," it may prolong " the blessing to an hundred more*."

It was an event, which diffused joy and gladness through the kingdom; and called forth the warmest expressions of attachment to our deliverer, and of gratitude to providence. No town, no place, exceeded, in ardor and gladness, on this occasion, the inhabitants of Taunton. Severely had they suffered under the rod of oppression. They flocked, in numbers, to the standard of the prince of Orange, and vied with their countrymen in their generous exertions to support his throne. The estimate they delivered in of the value of their estates has entailed, as will be seen in the next chapter, a *land-tax*, which is much higher than is paid in most parts of the kingdom. But, burthen some and unequal as it is, this very circumstance teaches an useful lesson: it should impress, on the minds of the present and future generations, a conviction of the great importance, in which their ancestors regarded the revolution. "The GLORIOUS REVOLUTION should be perpetually recalled to their remembrance, and " the immortal decree of the convention parliament continually

* Sir Brooke Boothby's excellent Letter to Mr. Burke, p. 102.

" impressed

“impressed upon their minds, as the great fundamental law of the constitution*.”

With this illustrious æra, in the civil history of Great Britain, we close that of Taunton: only adding, that there has ever since been, in this town, a large party attached to the principles of the revolution: and that, from this town there went up an address (a copy of which is below†) from the grand jury; animated with the spirit of liberty,

on

* Sir Brooke Boothby's Letter, p. 102.

† Somerset. To the KING's Most Excellent Majesty.

The humble Address of the Justices of the Peace, Grand Jury, and other Gentlemen, at the General Quarter-Sessions of the Peace, held at Taunton, the 4th day of October, 1715.

May it please your Majesty,

Among all the reasonable promises and engagements of your faithful subjects, suffer us, of the county of Somerset, to approach you with assurances, that you have there, also, a people, as warmly devoted to your service, as the most zealous in all your dominions. It has, indeed, been our misfortune to be very ill represented in parliament; but we have still been untainted in our own breasts. We have been *overpowered*, but not *corrupted*. Suffer us then to make those professions of loyalty and affection to your majesty, and your august house, at this time, which the worst of times would never induce us to shrink from, or suppress. Your majesty will then bear with us, if the ardency of our affection prompts us to address you with too great a freedom. Pardon us, great sir, if we are so filled with the admiration of your royal virtues, as to forget our distance: and heaven will forgive us, if we admit of more than ordinary transports at those blessings you have brought us, or an unusual indignation against those bale incendiaries, who themselves despise them, or would deprive us of them. *Incendiaries* which the worst of ages has not paralleled. *Traitors*, as far exceeding their brethren of the 5th of November, as the additional ingredients of HYPOCRISY, INGRATITUDE, and PERJURY, can make them.

Let them go on, invidiously, to disturb mankind, and fight against their Maker; let them shew their boasted *Loyalty* by *Rebellion*, and their *Religion* by *Perjury*; let them manifest their love to their native country, by conspiring to make it the prey and plunder of foreign armies; and, let the world see their zeal for the *Church of England*, by the pretended head they labour to set over it. We question not, but, if they kindle the fire, themselves will be the sacrifice. If they will not quit their *Inventions*, they shall *perish* in them. If they will not be *led*, they shall be *driven*, to repentance. If they will not taste your majesty's *Mercy*, they shall feel your *Justice*.

For our own parts, we satisfy ourselves that we have sufficiently proved our regard to our constitution, both in *Church and State*, by constantly adhering to those principles, which have placed them under the protection of your sacred majesty: and we cheerfully depend on the preservation of them, from the providence of a good God, and the vigilance and resolution of the best of kings. And we beg leave to declare to your majesty, and the whole world, that as the succession of your *Illustrious House* was ever dearer to us than our lives, so

we

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on the accession of George I. when, in his person, "the present
" royal family *were called, by the nation,* to the throne of these king-
" doms, to defend and support our religion, and liberties, and
" laws."

we will never fail to support and defend it at the expence of them; and that, as you have
daily, and hourly, the prayers and endeavours, so you shall never want the treasure, or the
blood, of

Your Majesty's

Most Loyal and Obedient Subjects.*

N. B. This was signed by all the Justices,
except one, and by every one of the
Grand Jury.

* Communicated by Mr. Norris.

CHAP.

C H A P. VI.

The present state of the town, the modern improvements, and population.

THE spirit of improvement in buildings, and laying out of towns, which has now diffused itself over the kingdom, is the consequence of the opulence, to which this country has attained. In the infancy of our manufactures and commerce, the attention of the people was engaged by the active and parsimonious efforts of industry. Yet, in an early period of their trade, the inhabitants of Taunton appear to have carried their views to objects of convenience and ornament. For more than 300 years back, a statute was passed, in the parliament held, at Westminster, the 16th day of January, in the 17th year of Edward IV. for paving this town; as also the towns of Cirencester, and Southampton*.

Whatever alterations the buildings might have undergone, in the course of nearly three centuries, as the necessities, convenience, or taste, of individuals, would dictate, it does not appear that any general change, for accommodation, or safety, took place, till within the memory of some. When this town took a lead in that great modern improvement, of turnpike roads. Into which, as its original and great cause, may probably be traced, not only many other advantages, but a general civilization and refinement of manners, the spread of the same modes of dress and living, of the same taste and amusements, through the kingdom; in consequence of the frequent and easy com-

* Sir Robert Cotton's Abridgement of the Records in the Tower of London, 1657, p. 703.

munications

munications which turnpike roads have opened between the capital and all other towns, to the remotest extremities of the isle.

Taunton was the first town in the west of England, that applied to parliament for a turnpike act. The bill was opposed by Humphrey Sydenham, esq; member for Exeter, who asserted, that the roads were in very good repair: but was supported by Thomas Prowse, esq; who put the house into a roar of laughter, by undertaking to prove, that the roads were in so bad a state, that it would be no more expence to make them *navigable*, than to make them fit for carriages*. This contrast was easily reconciled, and the act passed in the 25th of George II. in the year 1752†. In the year 1765, the 5th of his present majesty, a new act was procured, for amending, widening, and keeping in repair, several other roads adjoining to the town, besides those included in the first statute. The continuance of these two acts was limited to the 1st of May, 1799. But the second had not been 13 years in force, before the state of the roads rendered it expedient to apply to parliament for an enlargement of the terms of the former acts, and for some other powers, which were not included in them.

A third act, therefore, repealing the two preceding, was passed in the year 1778, and the 18th of his present majesty‡. This act changed the qualification of a trustee from the possession of, or title to, a personal estate of 1000l. value, into one of 2000l. or an estate, in land, by his own, or his wife's, right, of 100l. clear yearly value, above reprises, or being heir apparent to one of the clear yearly value of 200l. To the validity of the election of new trustees, it is

* It may be proper to observe here, that the roads, in the neighbourhood of Taunton, were, not only narrow, but deep in water. The floods were frequently so high, as to prevent persons from travelling; and some were, occasionally, drowned. In hard frosts, besides being obliged to lead their horses in their hands, it was necessary to break the ice with a strong staff, for nine miles out of ten. Locke's MS.

† Locke's MS.

‡ This act divides the roads into the districts of Minehead and Milverton, Broomfield, London and Bridgwater, Wellington and Pitminster, and of Shoreditch. It also, by clauses, added to that purpose, extends the provisions of the Chard road, acts 2d and 17th George III. to the road, from a certain direction post in *Widcombe-Moor*, by *Helmen-Clavel*, over *Brown-down*, through *Street-Ash-Lane*, to Chard.

enacted,

enacted, that they be chosen by 13, or more, of the surviving trustees, and, after 21 days public notice of the meeting for such an election. Except, in this case, or that of the appointment of a collector of the tolls, on the death, or removal, of a former one, when two trustees may act; or, in that of borrowing money, when 13 must be present; seven are sufficient to carry the various powers of the act into execution. Among other clauses, peculiar to this act, was one, enacting the same tolls at every gate on a traveller passing through the town on the same day; and another, authorizing the demand at every gate, on a Sunday, of the same as payable on other days, and, over and above, a like toll, to be taken as a Sunday's toll. The application, to which it appropriated three-fourths of the Sunday's toll, constitutes a peculiar and important object of this act: for it assigns such a proportion of the tolls, and the like proportion of the monies borrowed, by virtue of it, to the repaving, repairing, and keeping in repair, the public footways, on the sides of the East-street, Fore-street, North-street, and High-street. It enlarges the term of the former acts, from the 1st of May, 1799, to the end of the next sessions of parliament; and, after the expiration of the said term, to the further term of 21 years, and, from thence, to the end of the next sessions of parliament*.

The

* To the above view of the general operation and extent of the last road act, it may be proper to subjoin a concise state of the tolls it requires, the penalties it enacts, and the limitations to which it is subject.—The tolls it authorizes, are: L. S. D.
For every horse, mare, gelding, mule or ass, drawing in any coach, landau, berlin, chariot, chaise, phaeton, chair, calash, caravan, hearse, waggon, wain, cart, putt, dray, litter, or other carriage whatsoever, 0 0 3
For every ox, steer, gale, or bull, drawing singly, and not in pairs, or a-breast, in any waggon, wain, cart, putt, dray, litter, or other carriage, 0 0 2
For every ox, steer, gale, or bull, drawing a-breast, or in pairs, in any waggon, wain, cart, putt, dray, litter, or other carriage, 0 0 1½
For every horse, mare, gelding, mule, or ass, not drawing, 0 0 1
For every drove of oxen, cows, or neat cattle, per score, 0 0 10
and so in proportion for any greater or less number.
For every drove of hogs, or pigs, calves, sheep, or lambs, per score, — 0 0 5
and so in proportion to the number.

N. B. These tolls may be levied, in case of refusal, by distress.

The penalties, under this act, are,

For acting as a trustee, without being elected, and qualified, according to the directions of the act, ————— 100 0 0
A a On

The next improvement of the town was effected by the *market-house act*. The market was formerly held in the open streets, on a triangular

	L.	S.	D.
On avoiding the payment of the tolls, _____	2	0	0
On mortgagees refusing to account for the tolls in their possession ; for every offence, _____	100	0	0
On mortgagees continuing to receive the tolls, after payment, or tender, of their principal and interest, and costs, _____			
Officers and persons receiving monies, for refusing to account, to verify their accounts, and pay the balance, are to be prosecuted before a justice of the peace, and committed.			<i>Treble the sums received.</i>
On clerks, treasurers, collectors, and other officers, and their executors or administrators, for refusing to deliver up their books and papers, _____	100	0	0
For taking away materials gathered for repairing the roads ; for every offence, _____	2	0	0
On persons who neglect or refuse to remove annoyances, for a second and every subsequent offence, _____	2	0	0
On a sheriff, deputies, or bailiffs, or coroner, for default with respect to obliging owners of lands to treat for the same, a fine, not exceeding, on any one person, for one offence, _____	100	0	0
On surveyors of the highways, for refusing to deliver in lists of persons liable to do statute work ; for every offence, _____	2	0	0
On persons for making default in the performance of statute duty, different penalties, in proportion to the duty, to which they are by law liable.			
For haling timber or stone, otherwise than upon wheel carriages, or suffering it to drag upon the road ; for every offence, _____	2	0	0
For breaking down or defacing any stones, or posts, erected on the road ; or causing the same to be done ; for every post or stone pulled down or injured, _____	2	0	0
N. B. Fines and penalties to be recovered by distress and sale, and to be applied to the purposes of the act.			

The limitations, besides those mentioned above, by which the operation of this act is restrained, are of the following nature. To the regularity and validity of the meetings of trustees, it is enacted, that public notice of them be given, in writing, signed by the clerk of the trustees, or any two or more of them, and affixed upon some conspicuous part of the outside of the market-house, in Taunton, and upon all the gates or turnpikes standing upon its roads ; and to be inserted in some public newspaper, which is circulated in the county, 20 days before the intended meeting : such notice specifying the time of meeting, and the business to be transacted.

When there is not a sufficient number of trustees at any meeting, such meeting, it is provided, shall be adjourned to the 14th day next after it ; of which adjournment, six days public notice is to be given by the clerk.

No business is to begin before eleven o'clock in the fore-noon ; and no adjournment to be made to any later hour, than two o'clock in the afternoon. The trustees are to defray their own expences.

Tolls are payable but once a day.—No longer a term than three years to be granted to any who are disposed to farm the tolls. On 21 days public notice, and with the consent of those, who are entitled to five-sixth parts of the monies due, on the credit of the tolls, it is made lawful to lessen the tolls, and for such time as they shall think proper. No money shall be borrowed on the credit of the tolls, unless two days public notice of it be given.

The

representation, the way was left open for the election of the candidates, who contested their claims, without any opposition. A subscription of 2000*l.* in the name of Nathaniel Webb, esq; one of these gentlemen, and the aid of both in procuring an act of parliament for the purpose, gave actual existence to a capital improvement of the town, which had, for some years, been treated by many as an idle chimera, or an artful decoy to weaken an opposite party*.

In 1768, the important and useful plan of the association received the sanction of the legislature, and an act passed for “erecting a market-house, and holding a market, in the town of Taunton, in the county of Somerset, and for preventing the holding of any market in the streets of the said town.” These were the first and immediate objects of the act, but it comprehended other designs, conducive to the embellishment of the town, the accommodation of its inhabitants in general, and the benefit of its poor in particular.

For, whereas the passage, through North-street, to the bridge, commonly called Nurton-bridge, was greatly obstructed by two old and ruinous houses, which divided the end of North-street, into a narrow lane, and a horse road, called Groping-lane and Horse-lane, the act provided, that the trustees should purchase the said houses and the site of them, pull them down, dispose of the materials by sale, for the purposes of the act, and throw the ground, on which they stood, into an open and common highway. By virtue of this act, the trustees were empowered to cleanse and free the town from all annoyances, obstructions, and nuisances whatsoever; and to remove all sign-posts, penthouses, spouts, cellar windows, doors going into cellars, shop windows, and all other encroachments on the streets, or passages of the town; which it requires shall be done, after 14 days notice, by the proprietors or occupiers of the same, or on their neglect, at their cost, by the trustees. The act further provides for the lighting of the town, by erecting glass lamps in the four principal

* The idea of this improvement was first, incidentally, started at a convivial meeting; at which were present Mr. William Norris, Mr. Samuel Brooks, Mr. James Hare, and several more. On being made known, it met approbation; and the numbers, who entered into the design, increased weekly, till they amounted to near a hundred. But the ripening and execution of the scheme were, particularly, owing to the ingenuity, application, and exertions of Mr. James Foy.

streets,

streets, called the East-street, the High-street, the North-street, and the Fore-street. But the clause of this statute, the most benevolent in its nature, and most important in its influence, is that, which provides ; that, after the payment of all purchase monies, for ground, houses, and standings, of all expences for erecting the market and buildings, and placing, maintaining, and lighting of lamps, and the discharge of all mortgages, and all debts, the tolls, rents, and profits of the market shall form an estate, for the cloathing, educating, and placing out apprentices, so many of the children of the poor inhabitants of the parish of St. Mary Magdalen, as any nine or more of the trustees shall direct.

Under the auspices of this act*, the necessary purchases having been made and the old buildings pulled down, a new market-house, on
a model

* The following abstract will give the clauses of the market-house act, which are still in force, since the act was carried into execution.

The act appointed, by name, 25 gentlemen as trustees, and left the trust open to as many others, who, before the 24th of June, 1769, should subscribe five guineas, as a free gift, to the purposes of it. After that time, if the number, on the whole, should not amount to 60 ; or in any future period, should by death or otherwise, be reduced below that number ; then the act directs, that the complement should be made up by the choice of new trustees, elected by the surviving trustees, or any nine or more of them, under their hands and seals : and as often as vacancies should reduce the number below 60.

The *powers* invested by the act in the trustees, or any nine or more of them, are a right to hold the market on the ground, which shall be set out, under the operation of it for that purpose—to receive the rents and tolls, and to enjoy all the privileges and emoluments heretofore belonging to the market—and, from time to time, to fix the hours of beginning and closing the market, giving notice of the same by ringing a bell—to lease out, for any term, not exceeding seven years, any building and erections, for the best rent that can be had, and the tolls of the market for such sums, as they shall think reasonable, to be applied to the purposes of the act—also to appoint and remove officers, from time to time, and take security from the same.

The *obligations*, under which the act brought the trustees, were to pay, in future, the land-tax, church and poor rates, with which the grounds and buildings, vested in them by virtue of the act, were charged in 1768 ; also to make satisfaction to the bishop of Winchester, and his portreeves, by paying, in half-yearly payments, at Lady-day and Michaelmas, a neat annual rent of 1l. 4s. 8d. to the former ; and a neat yearly sum of 18l. in half-yearly payments, at the same seasons, to the latter. It also obliges the officers, acting under the trustees, when required, to produce to them, or to any nine or more of them, fair accounts of all monies received and disposed of, with vouchers, if called on, to verify the same on oath, and to pay the balance to the said trustees, or their order. N. B. Any two or more of the trustees are empowered to administer, in this case, the oath.

The *limitations*, to which the operations of the act are subject, are relative to the *election of new trustees* ; viz. that two-thirds of them shall be inhabitants of the town, and one-third

a model furnished by Coplestone Warre Bampfylde, esq; was erected; which was finished in 1772. This is an elegant building, the front looks

third gentlemen residing in the neighbourhood; that notice of the meeting, for the election of new trustees, shall be given by their clerk, by affixing the same in writing on the door of St. Mary Magdalen's church, 20 days previously to such election.—With respect to the *charity*, which it empowers the trustees to establish, the election of children to the benefit of it is limited to the 26th of December, in every year, or if that day should be a Sunday, to the next day; to children above six and under ten years of age; and to this particular mode, viz. the names of the children, whose parents choose to apply, to be written on paper, folded up and put into a box; and those whose names, on its being shaken, shall be first drawn by an indifferent person, to the amount of the number previously determined by the trustees, shall be elected.—The benefit of the charity is limited to instruction, in reading, writing, and arithmetic, to cloathing, not exceeding 40s. for each child to 13 years of age, as the longest period to which these benefits shall be enjoyed, and to an apprentice fee, on being bound out at 12 years of age, of 5l. or 8l. at the utmost. N. B. It is expressly provided, that no parent shall lose his franchise on account of his child's being in this charity. The legality of every meeting, except that on the 26th of December annually, for carrying into execution the powers contained in the act, is limited by the condition of a previous notice, of at least four days, to be given in St. Mary Magdalen's church, after divine service on a Sunday morning.—And further, every action commenced against any person, for any thing done in pursuance of this act, shall be brought within six months after the fact is committed, and be tried in the county of Somerset. The defendant is allowed to plead the general issue and give this act in evidence.

The *penalties* affixed on offences committed against this act are as follows. Disqualification of a trustee from acting, who shall for two years successively neglect to act, or shall refuse to act. A fine of 5l. to be levied on every one who shall erect a stall for a market, or vend cattle or provision in any street besides those specified in the act; or within the space of 1000 yards from the bounds of the same market, without a licence under the hands and seals of the trustees, or any two or more of them, to expose commodities to sale in any shop, being part of their respective dwelling houses, on any day of the week. The like fine lies against exposing any commodities to sale before or after the ringing of the bell.—A penalty of 10s. on the first offence, for every lamp extinguished, or lamp, or lamp-post, or iron and furniture, broken, thrown down, or damaged; on the second, 15s. and on the third 20s. with full satisfaction for the damages done. If such forfeiture be not paid, nor such satisfaction made, commitment to the house of correction, for two calendar months, to hard labour.—N. B. One moiety of the recovered forfeiture is the perquisite of the informer, the other moiety is to be applied to the purposes of the act.

The person, who, having through negligence or accident damaged any of the lamps, or the posts, or irons and furniture, shall refuse, on demand, to make satisfaction, shall be summoned before any justice of the county or borough, and shall be amenable for such satisfaction, as shall to the same justice appear just and reasonable.—A power invested in the bishop of Winchester, and the portreeves, if their respective annuities be unpaid for the space of 14 days, after the times appointed, to collect the rents of the market, till all arrears be paid, and all damages fully satisfied. Distress to be levied on the goods of any officer of the trustees, for any balance of monies proved to be in his hands, on confession, or the oath of one or more witnesses, and which he shall refuse to pay. Or if his goods are not sufficient to answer such balance, or he shall refuse to produce his account and vouchers, and to verify the same on oath, commitment to the common gaol of the county, or town, or place

looks to the north. The house, which is in the centre, is laid out into different apartments for the purposes of justice, amusement, and pleasure, as we have before represented; and two large wings, called arcades, accommodate the farmers and tradesmen; while the butchery is formed of moveable standings, placed in rows, on the area before the market-house. This area, which is open and spacious, is enclosed with posts and chains, and in the middle of it runs, to the north, a large pavement of broad-stones, 216 feet long and 18 feet wide, called the Parade.

The improvements, which have been thus given to the town, are so commodious and beautiful, so pleasing to the eye, and so conducive to health, so agreeable and useful, in point of convenience and morals, to the inhabitants, and so captivating to the traveller; that posterity must hold in grateful respect the taste which designed them, and the public spirit from which they originated. We only regret, that the liberal undertaking was not left wholly to be supported by the voluntary contributions of its friends, who were many, and by the funds arising from the market, totally independent of the issue of an *election*, which to be *constitutional* and an efficient benefit to the *nation*, must be free from every species and appearance of bribery, and of a sale of the most valuable franchise.

The effects of the improvements, which we have described, have been visible not only on the spot, where they immediately took place, but through the whole town; in which we have, every where, seen new,

place of his residence, to remain there without bail or mainprize; till he shall have produced and verified his account, and paid the balance, or compounded for the same.

To a penalty of 10s. is every one subject, who shall lead, drive, ride, or place any horse or beast; or drive any wheelbarrow, or run any wheel, or draw any sledge, upon the foot-pavement; or shall throw or lay, or permit to be thrown or laid, in, or shall take or carry away any ashes, dust, filth, and rubbish, from the streets; or shall permit swine to go at large in any street; or shall leave, or cause to be left, any carriage, stone, timber, or cask, or any thing that may occasion an annoyance or obstruction, in any of the streets or public passages. The penalties fixed by the act, it is enacted, shall be levied by distress and sale of the offender's goods, and shall be applied to the purposes of the act.

The act, though it forms a new corporation, invested with powers over the market, yet makes a saving provision to the *mayor*, for the time being, of his office, as the clerk of the market, with all the former perquisites and advantages of it; to the *constables* of the borough, of their authority, with its advantages of weighing, as they before enjoyed it; and to the *king*, of such rents, dues, and payments, as were due and payable, at the time, on account of any houses, standing on the Island, or Cornhill.

regular,

regular, and handsome buildings rise up, within these twenty years. The most general change, in point both of convenience and appearance, was produced by carrying into execution that part of the last turnpike act, which related to paving the streets. In this business Mr. Hammet, then a resident in the town, in 1779, took the lead, and by his activity and perseverance gave a specimen, in High-street, of the advantages, which would be derived from carrying the new pavement through every street; which has been since done, in a style superior indeed to the first specimen.

A more recent and considerable alteration in the state of a principal part of the town, at once highly commodious and ornamental, has been effected by the operation of a bill, which Sir Benjamin Hammet moved and carried through parliament till it passed into an act, in 1788, to enable him to purchase, and pull down, two houses, in Fore-street; one in the occupation of Mr. Thomas Locke, the other then empty, but lately in the occupation of Mr. William Pring, with several other houses and buildings; and, on the site of them, to lay out and open a passage, in a direct line to St. Mary Magdalen's church, not less than 36 feet wide, and to erect houses and buildings. Before this, the curious and elegant tower of St. Mary Magdalen's church was almost hid from view by buildings, and the access to the church was through a narrow lane, which did not permit a carriage to pass without incommoding and endangering a foot-passenger, and opposite the great entrance of the church stood an old ruinous alms-house, displeasing to the eye, and offensive to the smell. Sir Benjamin Hammet, under the sanction of this act, at his own cost and risk, has opened a spacious avenue to the church, and built a street, called Hammet-street, of handsome houses, terminating in a large area, before the great door, and exhibiting the fine Gothic tower, to the full view of the spectator, from the Parade: the accommodation to the public is great, and the effect does honour to the taste that designed it.

The town, by these improvements, now affords, what for many years it wanted, houses for the reception of genteel families out of trade. Many circumstances invite the settlement of such in it: principally, a large market on Saturday, well furnished with fish both from the south and north channels, and plentifully stored with poultry,
from

and all kinds of provisions, of the quality so rich a vale as Taunton Dean may be expected to produce; which at the advanced prices, that the articles of food have risen to, are cheap in proportion, compared with many markets, in other parts of the kingdom.—The tolls of the market are farmed at 400l. per annum, which serves to give the reader an idea of the number of standings, occupied by the butchers, and of the quantity of other provisions, sold out of baskets or at stalls. Another market, chiefly consisting of fish, butcher's meat, vegetables and fruits, is held on Wednesdays. The produce of the rich and extensive gardens, near the town, and the flesh of the cattle fattened in its pastures, are exposed to sale almost every day in the week. But it is an agreeable and singular circumstance, that there is not one butcher's shop in the town; all the meat being sold from moveable standings.

Taunton may promise itself some considerable benefits from a new market, lately set up in it, which commenced on the first Saturday in November, 1789; and is held, on the first Saturday in every month for live cattle, called "The Great Market." Its fairs are two: one held on the 17th of June, in the middle of the town, for all sorts of cattle and horses, for one day only. The other on the 7th of July, which is kept on the north-bridge and in the north town, lasts three days; the first of which opens very early in the morning with the sale of considerable quantities of garlick, from barges; to this succeeds the fair for all sorts of cattle and horses. The other two days are solely for pedlary and confectionary wares. The tolls of both fairs belong to the bishop of Winchester, as lord of the manor.

The town is enlivened and benefited by the communication it has with London, and other capital places, by means of the machines, which run through it. It is little more than twenty years since, that only one stage coach, besides that which sets off for London three times in a week, passed through it, in the whole week; which was two days going from Bristol to Exeter, and as many on the return: and both times lodged at Taunton. Before the turnpike roads, the Taunton stage to London did not finish its journey, in less than four days: which it now executes in two. It sets out from Taunton, and from London, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning,

at four o'clock, and arrives at each place on the evening of the following days : and, in the summer months, by going all night, arrives in London at noon. The mail-coach also passes daily through Taunton, to London, at nine o'clock in the morning. A stage runs, as often, through this town, from Exeter to Bristol ; and another from the former city to Bath : meeting others running from the latter places to the first. On Sunday and Thursday evenings a coach, now, arrives at Taunton from Barnstaple, and leaves it, for that place, on Monday and Friday mornings. And last summer, a new coach was set up to go twice a week between Taunton and Sidmouth.

The inhabitants are, within these few years, as well accommodated with an internal mode of conveyance from one part of the town to another. For, whereas there was within 20 years since only one sedan-chair in the whole town, and that the property of a private family ; there are now four kept for hire.

Our survey of the present state of the town would be imperfect, if we did not notice some public institutions of great utility, that are of modern date in it.

The author of this work has a pleasure in reflecting, that in the year 1765, he brought forward, with effect, the plan of an annuitant society for the benefit of the widows ; in which he was seconded and assisted, in a polite and active manner, by the late major-general Roberts. The scheme met with some difficulties and obstructions, but through the exertions of some gentlemen of the town, and of others at Bridgwater, and in the neighbourhood, who entered into its prudent and benevolent design, it was adopted, and carried into execution, and has existed ever since with credit. Its capital stock, October 6th, 1790, amounted to 250*l.* in the security of the Taunton turnpikes, and to 5000*l.* in the three per cent annuities, besides 375*l.* of dividends then due. And its funds and annual subscriptions paid 15 annuitants at 20*l.* each, and one at 10*l.* in proportion to the number of years the husbands of the annuitants had respectively subscribed.

In 1788, March 13, was formed a society, for the institution of Sunday schools, in this town ; which met with a ready and generous support, and has been attended with visible good effect ; it includes, in its pious and paternal operation, the instruction of 200 children.

A design,

A design, which requires the concurrence of many to carry it into effect, must necessarily advance slowly to maturity. This was the case of the institution of the Sunday schools, at Taunton. But, while it was a business of some time to engage the whole town in it, a private person, Mr. Harris, a gardener, in Norton, singly led the way, in this good work; surrounded by a number of poor children in the extremity of the town, where he lived, he became himself their instructor, conducted them to public worship, and, without gratuity, took on himself the care of them, which, in the same free manner, he continued, for three years. The books of the society will preserve the names of those gentlemen, to whose goodness the other schools owe their origin and support.

It is an agreeable proof of the increasing love of reading, that, in Taunton, there are four book-societies. One consisting of 15 members, and another of 21: whereas, when the first was formed in 1766, it was difficult, from the town and neighbourhood, to meet with even 12 gentlemen, disposed to form such a literary association. The last, established, very recently, is confined to ladies: and the kind of publications, to which they have given the preference, promises to do honour to their judgement and taste.

Another modern institution, in which benevolence may rejoice, commenced in 1789. This is the *Dispensary* for the indigent sick, which Dr. Cox, at his own expence, opened and has continued to support, with medicine as well as attendance, in concurrence with Mr. Trott, as apothecary and surgeon, with little foreign aid. Near 300 patients have been relieved by it. Humanity pleads strongly in favour of such an institution, and promises herself, that patrons and benefactors will not be wanting to countenance and extend the compassionate aids it offers to the sick, and to give a sanction to the example it holds up to neighbouring towns.

In 1789, some gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood, influenced by patriotic principles, formed themselves into an association, annually, to celebrate, on the 4th of November, the glorious revolution of 1688: as an event, to which, under God, this country owes its deliverance from popery and arbitrary power; and to avow themselves, in the most explicit manner, advocates for the pure and

genuine principles of civil and religious liberty. At the next meeting, on November 4th, 1790, their numbers were increased; and it was then agreed to hold an annual meeting, on the 14th of July, in commemoration of the revolution of France, and the capture of the Bastile. Such associations are highly useful to awaken attention to "the RIGHTS OF MEN:" they consecrate conviviality to a noble object—of this object we must say, with all the ardor the love of our country or philanthropy can inspire, *Esse perpetua*.

The preceding pages of this chapter have presented an agreeable view of modern improvements, giving to the present state of the town, in many instances of embellishment, convenience, and utility, advantages, above what its inhabitants formerly enjoyed. We must now touch on a point, in which it has evidently declined from its former state, and that is its *population*.

When the poll-tax was laid on by king William III. in 1689, the inhabitants of Taunton amounted to upwards of 20,000 souls: this calculation has been adopted and transmitted, ever since, by one writer after another. In the succeeding reign of queen Anne, this town was called her "nursery for soldiers*." But modern authors have committed a great error, by following the estimate at which the number of the people was fixed in those periods. The numbers admitted to poll, at different elections, do not appear to have, even then, borne that proportion to the whole, which such a state of population would produce. For,

In 1695 there were polled 533	In 1702 there were polled 565
1698 ————— 577	1710 ————— 975
1700 ————— 553	1714 ————— 1017†

The unsuccessful candidates, at this last election, alledged, as we have seen‡, that this great number was formed by the illegal conduct of the mayor; for the poll, in time past, had usually consisted only of 600: and by a narrow scrutiny made into the whole parish of St. Mary Magdalen, by the supervisors of the highways, it appeared that there were not 1000 housekeepers in the whole extent of it; nor full

* Locke's MS.

† From papers in the possession of Mr. John Way.

‡ Chap. III. p. 74, 76.

700 within the borough. Allowing five persons to every family, the number of inhabitants in the parish of St. Mary Magdalen could not, at that time, be reckoned more than 5000. If another 5000 be added for the suburbs, which, then, lay mostly in St. James' parish, the total will still fall very short of the number assigned to the year 1689.

It is, undoubtedly, certain, that since the year 1715, the town has greatly decreased in the number of inhabitants, and very many houses, in those suburbs, are levelled to the ground. The present state of its population the author of this history has ascertained, by going from house to house; and the following particulars give the result of his enquiries, on the particular heads, into which, to make his calculations minute and full, he judged it expedient to throw them. He extended his scrutiny into the parishes of Wilton and Bishops-Hull, only confining himself within the turnpike gates or to the contiguity of houses, except, where even the borough reaches beyond the gate leading to Pitminster. He found the number of

Houses, exclusively of Gray's, Huish's, Henley's, and Pope's				
alms-houses, to amount to	—	—	—	1118
Houses uninhabited, inclusively of the unfinished dwellings				
in Hammet-street,	—	—	—	47
The families,	—	—	—	1199
Males,	—	2384	} Souls in all,	5472
Females,	—	3088		
Married persons,	—	—	—	1181
Widowers,	—	—	—	106
Widows,	—	—	—	280
Under 15 years of age,	—	—	—	1695
Above 50 and not 70 years old,	—	—	—	797
Above 70,	—	—	—	258
Above 80 and under 90,	—	—	—	69
Above 90 and under 100,	—	—	—	11
At 100,	—	—	—	1
At 102,	—	—	—	1

The number of persons in Taunton above 50 years of age, being more than one-sixth of the whole number of inhabitants, especially if added to the number of those who have reached beyond 70, must
be

be allowed to speak in favour of the salubrity of its air : and prove, that its decrease, in respect of population, should not be ascribed to epidemical diseases, or an unwholesome situation, but to the emigration of the lower classes, whom lucrative views have invited to leave it.

We must not close our History of Taunton without noticing the proportion it pays to the land-tax. Here, as it has been observed, in the last chapter, its zeal for the revolution has entailed on it a burden, from which it has no prospect of being relieved, but by an equal assessment of estates through the kingdom. For it pays a greater sum than the town of Bridgwater, and the cities of Bath and Wells together, which are three of the most ancient and capital towns in the county, and the first of those cities has amazingly increased in extent, number of buildings, and population. The land-tax, at 4s. in the pound, produces at

Bath, — —	443 6 0	Taunton borough*,	726 3 0
Wells, — —	480 17 6	Holway tything, —	286 15 0
Bridgwater and Hay- grove tything, }	366 5 0	Taunton St. James, townside, }	215 5 10
		Ditto, landside,	262 13 0
	£1290 8 6		

Paid by Taunton, £1490 16 10

The last particular to be noticed in this chapter is the share, which this town bears towards the county rates. This, in pursuance of the statute of 12th of George II. and the order at Taunton sessions 1742, was settled thus: Taunton and Taunton Dean hundred contains 30 parishes. When 100l. is to be raised by a county rate, the proportion of St. Mary Magdalen's parish to that sum is 9s. 6d. and of Taunton St. James 2s. 6½d†.

* There are but two pieces of ground rated with Taunton borough, viz. Paul's Field, and a garden plot behind Mr. Prockter Thomas' house, near Flook Bridge. The above is from the communication of Mr. Norris.

† Goddard's Extract from the Sessions Roll, p. 90, and 122.

A D D E N D A.

PAGE 35. The sum, with which Mr. John Noble endowed Gray's alms-house, it appears, by the deed of settlement, in the hands of his brother, Mr. Luke Noble, was 150l.

P. 42, note. To the charities mentioned in this note, it may be proper to add a benefaction to the parishes of St. Mary Magdalen and St. James, of the interest of 50l. for ever to each, left by the last will of Mr. Simon Stacey, dated the 18th of March, 8 Anne, to be applied to the benefit of four poor men in each parish, by being laid out yearly in gray kersey and trimmings suitable to it, to make each of them a coat, at or about the 24th of June. This Mr. Stacey also bequeathed the interest of 20l. for ever to the poor of the society of Paul's meeting, in Taunton, to be distributed amongst them yearly, at or about the 24th of June. By a paper, bearing date 1647, purporting to be an extract from an old book of the constables, containing the securities for the poor, it appears, that there were certain sums given by beneficent persons to be lent to the poor, viz. 40l. by Mr. Perry, of West-Buckland; 40l. by Mr. Nathaniel Colwart, of Taunton, 1577. 10l. by Mr. Bowerman, of Hemmock, 1581. 10l. by an alms-woman dying intestate to Mr. Thomas Pope and Thomas Davidge, her administrators; 3l. by the parson of Calverly; 20l. by Henry Rofter; 20l. by a servant of Roger Warre 40l. of Mr. Every's money, 1621. 20l. by my lord Popham; 20l. by Mr. Barber; 30l. by Jasper Matthews; 10l. by Mr. Windham; 22l. by Mrs. Rachel Portman; 10l. by Thomas Symonds; 10l. by William Symonds; 51l. by Mr. Tagg*. The loss of such charitable bequests candour would hope has not proceeded from base embezzlement of public monies, but it certainly indicates a very reprehensible carelessness and inattention; and is a warning to trustees to be not only faithful in the distribution of charities, but to be careful of the securities on which they lend, and attentive to keep a trust full, as old trustees die or neglect to act.

P. 48, note. The occasion of the purchase of the workhouse, at Tone-bridge, was a gift of 100l. by Mrs. Margaret Ackland, for the benefit of the poor of the borough of Taunton. To this sum the constables, Roger Hill, gent. and Robert Moggridge, added, out of the rents of the town-lands, 58l. 14s. to complete the purchase of a cottage and garden, with the appurtenances, in the tything of Grafs-croft, in the hundred of Staplegrove, of the yearly value of 20l. These premises were conveyed over, in trust, to the constables, for *the alone help and use*, and *for the most profit and advantage* of the poor of the borough of Taunton *at the discretion* of the constables, and other magistrates of the said town and borough, or the major part of them†. It has been customary to apply the profits and issues of the above premises exclusively to the benefit of poor widows.

P. 91. To the first mention of the return of Sir Benjamin Hammet to be the representative of Taunton, a particular, on which the author wanted, when that part of the work was printed off, authentic and full information, should be added. It is this;

* This paper and Mr. Stacey's will are in the hands of Mr. John Way, who favoured the author with the use of them.

† On the information of Mr. Franklin, and the authority of the decree of chancery, relative to the town lands, with the inspection of which Mr. Sweeting, the town-clerk, obliged the author.

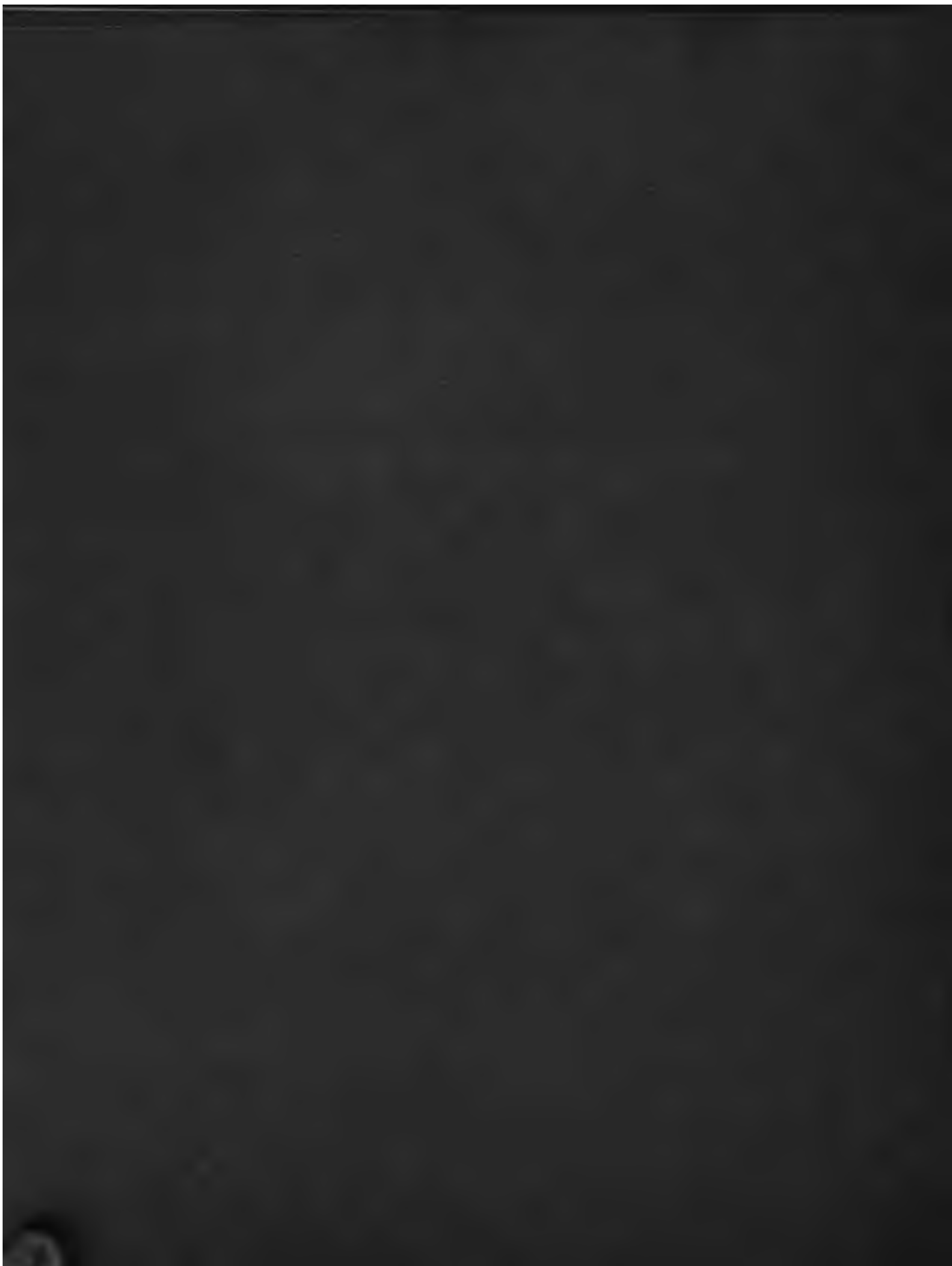
that in the last session of the last parliament, this gentleman brought into the house, and carried, a bill, to repeal the statute, which enacted, in certain cases, the burning of women. An unknown writer, in the Gentleman's Magazine, Supplement, part II. vol. IX. p. 1185, has spoken of this bill in the highest terms of eulogium, and expresses his hope, that some public spirited member of parliament, by following such an example of correcting the ferocity of our penal statutes, will immortalize the name of Sir Benjamin Hammet and obtain a repeal of the entire code.

P. 123, note. The song on the eleventh of May, given in this page, appears to want a verse: since it went to the press, there has been repeated to the author, a verse, which forms a suitable close, and ought therefore to be preserved. It is as follows:

Let Taunton men be mindful then
In keeping of the day;
We'll give God praise, with joy, always,
Upon th' eleventh of May.

P. 179. *On this spot stood the Guildhall.*] Mr. Sweeting, the town-clerk, has, since the preceding pages passed through the press, favoured the author with the sight of a translation of a latin copy of the grant of the old Guildhall, to Nicholas Dixon, vicar of Taunton, by William Wainfleet, bishop of Winchester, dated the 16th of March, 6 Edward IV. to be held for ever on the condition of rendering, at the exchequer of Taunton, upon the feast of the nativity of St. John the baptist, one red rose, for all services and demands. The latin copy of this deed was taken out of the register of the said bishop, book I. and it remains in the sanctum sanctorum of Gray's alms house, amongst other writings. The condition of this grant refers to the civil contest of those times, between the houses of Lancaster and York, and marked the attachment, of bishop Wainfleet to the former. Tenures founded on such customs are monuments of the taste and manners, the literature and parties of the age.

F I N I S.



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